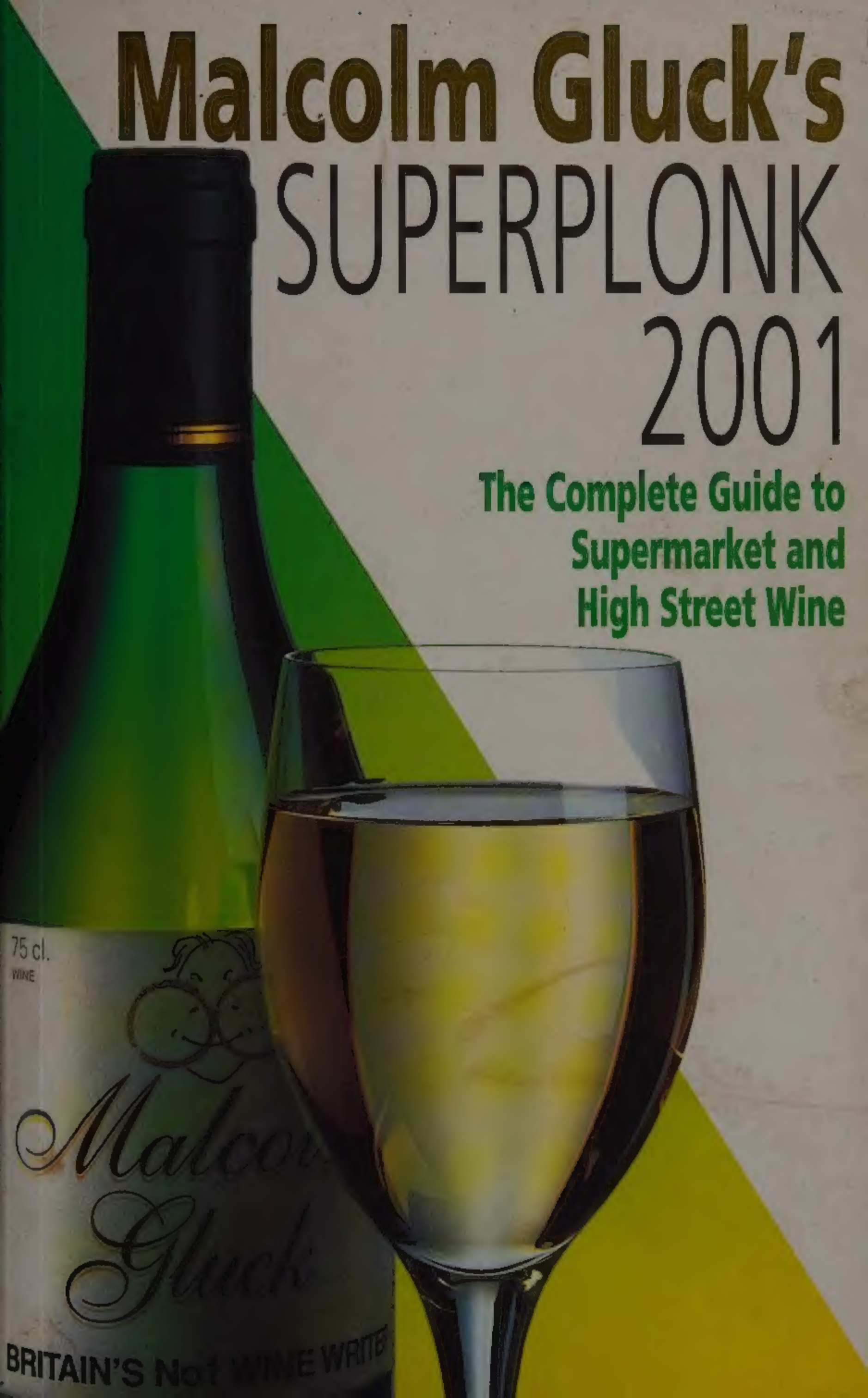
Malcolm Gluck's SUPERPLONK 2001

The Complete Guide to Supermarket and High Street Wine



SUPERPLONK 2001

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Malcolm Gluck is wine correspondent of the *Guardian*. His column, *Superplonk*, appears every Saturday in the newspaper's weekend supplement. In his capacity as consultant editor, he also writes monthly wine columns for Sainsbury's Magazine. He found the stamina to flirt briefly with BBC-TV, presenting his own wine series, *Gluck, Gluck, Gluck*, and time to put together a double-CD of classical wine music for Deutsche Grammophon. This year saw paperback publication of his guide to wine tasting, *The Sensational Liquid*, and the launch of a Superplonk website: Superplonk.com.

SUPERPLONK 2001

MALCOLM GLUCK

Hodder & Stoughton

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First published in Great Britain in 2000 by Hodder and Stoughton
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Gluck, Malcolm
Superplonk 2001
1. Wine and wine making – Great Britain – Guidebooks
I. Title
642.1'2'0296'41

ISBN 0 340 71315 1

Book design by Georgina Widdrington
Author caricature by Gordon Thompson

Typeset by Rowland Phototypesetting Ltd,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

Hodder and Stoughton
A division of Hodder Headline
338 Euston Road
London NW1 3BH

In memory of Dawson Yeoman
and all the bottles we sank together in the 60s.

As each sidereal spin
impartially hustles us on
towards yet another birthday
and extirpation at last,
three consolations at least:
verse; viticulture; love

51ST BY PETER READING

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INTRODUCTION

THE NEW FACE

Welcome to the new face of *Superplonk*. It now includes all the retailers that previously appeared in my separate *Streetplonk* as well as being a bigger, richer, more comprehensive book than ever before. It contains far more wine entries, and it remains the most up-to-date wine guide in the UK, being a pertinent route map through the maze of the nation's wine shelves which is designed to stay fresh for many months

Facing a new millennium, and after ten years of writing this wine guide, deep and meaningful changes seemed necessary. Out has gone my often rambling and discursive book signing/ wine tasting diary which introduced previous editions but the retailer introductions are still animated and, I hope, pithy conveyances of the essential ethos of each one.

I have been persuaded that the book must change to meet the demands of an increasingly demanding readership. You can readily appreciate the changes just by feeling this book in your hands. It is plumper, more concise, and it concentrates to a far greater degree than ever before on the entries for the individual wines. It has been completely redesigned to make access more appropriate for whatever your wine interest happens to be.

THE NEW LAYOUT

A glance at the index demonstrates the extent of the new layout. It is broken down into five broad areas.

1. An A to Z of all wines by country, with the usual rating system (explained a few pages further on) and, where I've felt inclined, a bristle of verbiage about a particular wine. Each country has a very short introduction. The roll call of the countries now supplying the ever expanding thirst of us Britons, but not all represented in this book, is enough to astonish a wine merchant as recently as twenty years ago. The list covers Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Cyprus, England, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Moravia, Montenegro,

Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and the USA. Japan also makes wine, but I have yet to taste any.

2. Following this are the entries for all the fortified and sparkling wines.

3. Next comes the wine entries for individual retailers. The introduction to each is comprehensive and as informative as I can make it concomitant with reporting on the most amusing and/or crucial news concerning each plus any scandal (very little, alas). Retailer entries include dynamic Asda, bouncing Booths, bustling Budgens, concentrated Co-op, mouth watering Marks & Spencer, marvellous Majestic, magnificent Morrisons, orgasmic Oddbins, sensational Safeway, superb Sainsbury's, stunning Somerfield (including Kwik Save), sedate Spar, terrific Tesco, unctuous Unwins, and vivacious Victoria Wine/Thresher (including Bottoms Up and Wine Rack), wonderful Waitrose, and wacky Wine Cellar/Parisa.

The wines are broken down within each retailer category by country in alphabetical order, red and white, and then sparkling and fortified.

4. This section is designed to be both highly informative, hugely selective and mildly entertaining. It is a breakdown of wines in 5 categories:

- My top ten pre-coital masterpieces (i.e. aperitifs, pre-prandial tipples, libations for the libido).
- My top ten reflective pursuit bottles (i.e. wines as stimulating companions for the mind).
- My top ten *vins pour les grandes bouffes* (i e impressive bottles for festive meals and important dinners).
- My top ten super-model wines (i.e. exceptionally elegant white wines).
- My top ten tipples to enjoy before facing a firing squad (i.e. gorgeous reds to stiffen the sinews and summon up the blood).

These wines are among the highest scoring in the book, and readers are advised here and now that anyone who receives this book as a birthday present in late spring 2001 will probably encounter problems finding all these wines still on the shelf I cannot for the life of me explain why this should be, but any reader who does have a plausible theory, or indeed an implausible one, then please write to me care of the publisher.

5. The STOP PRESS. This has been a tradition with this book for some years now and it includes all the wines, worthy bottles each, which I managed to taste in the fortnight before the book went to press This is one reason why

I can truthfully say, hand on heart, that this is the most up-to-date wine guide you can lay your hands on.

SOME THINGS WILL NEVER CHANGE

I hope the above makes everything clear. If it isn't, please contact me at the publisher's, or at the *Guardian*, or access the new Superplonk website (www.superplonk.com) for an e-mail address where you can get in touch with me direct. I am hugely interested in what readers make of this new layout and, for that matter, any views you may have of any aspect of this book, my work in general, and wine matters.

However much this book may change, I will not. I have said for many years that my readers give me my living and I give my readers my liver, and this will not alter as long as there is breath in my body, a taste bud left in my mouth, a drop of ink remaining in my pen, and volition in my limbs.

HEALTH WARNING!

Health Warning is an arresting phrase and I have used it for some years now. I hope by employing it I may save you from working yourself up into a state. Let me explain.

I get a few letters a week from readers (both column and book) telling me that a wine which I have said is on sale in a certain supermarket is not there and that the wine has either sold out or the branch claims to have no knowledge of it; I get letters telling me that a wine is a bit dearer than I said it was; and I get the odd note revealing that the vintage of the 16 point wine I have enthused about and which my correspondent desperately wants to buy is different from the one listed.

First of all, let me say that no wine guide in the short and inglorious history of the genre is more exhaustively researched, checked and double-checked than this one. I do not list a wine if I do not have assurances from its retailer that it will be widely on sale when the guide is published. Where a wine is on restricted distribution, or stocks are short and vulnerable to the assault of determined readers (i.e. virtually all high-rating, very cheap bottles), I will always clearly say so. However, large retailers use computer systems which cannot anticipate uncommon demand and which often miss the odd branch off the anticipated stocking list. I cannot check every branch myself (though I do nose around them when I can) and so a wine in this book may well, infuriatingly, be missing at the odd branch of its retailer

and may not even be heard of by the branch simply because of inhuman error. Conversely, the same technology often tells a retailer's head office that a wine is out of stock when it has merely been cleared out of the warehouse. It may still be on sale in certain branches. Then there is the fact that not every wine I write about is stocked by every single branch of its listed supermarket. Every store has what are called retail plans and there may be half a dozen of these, and every wine is subject to a different stocking policy according to the dictates of these cold-hearted plans.

I accept a wine as being in healthy distribution if several hundred branches, all over the country not just in selected parts of it, stock the wine. Do not assume, however, that this means every single branch has the wine.

I cannot, equally, guarantee that every wine in this book will still be in the same price bracket as printed. The vast majority will be. But there will always be the odd bottle from a country suddenly subject to a vicious swing in currency rates, or subject to an unprecedented rise in production costs which the supermarket cannot or is not prepared to swallow, and so a few pennies will get added to the price. If it is pounds, then you have cause for legitimate grievance. Please write to me. But don't lose a night's sleep if a wine is 20p more than I said it is. If you must, write to the appropriate supermarket The department and the address to write to is provided with each supermarket's entry.

Now the puzzle of differing vintages When I list and rate a wine, I do so only for the vintage stated. Any other vintage is a different wine requiring a new rating. Where vintages do have little difference in fruit quality, and more than a single vintage is on sale, then I say this clearly. If two vintages are on sale, and vary in quality and/or style, then they will be separately rated. However, be aware of one thing.

Superplonk is the biggest selling wine guide in the Queendom. I say this not to brag but, more important, to acquaint you with a reality which may cause you some irritation When *Superplonk* appears on sale there will be lots of eager drinkers aiming straight for the highest rating wines as soon as possible after the book is published. Thus the supermarket wine buyer who assures me that she has masses of stock of Domaine Piddlewhatsit and the wine will withstand the most virulent of sieges may find her shelves emptying in a tenth of the time she banked on not knowing, of course, how well I rate the wine until the book goes on sale. It is entirely possible, therefore, that the vintage of a highly rated wine may sell out so quickly that new stocks of the follow-on vintage may be urgently brought on to the shelf before I have tasted them. This can happen in some instances. I

offer a bunch of perishable pansies, not a wreath of immortelles. I can do nothing about this fact of wine writing life, except to give up writing about wine.

Lastly, one thing more:

'Wine is a hostage to several fortunes (weather being even more uncertain and unpredictable than exchange rates) but the wine writer is hostage to just one: he cannot pour for his readers precisely the same wine as he poured for himself.'

This holds true for every wine in this book and every wine I will write about in the years to come (for as long as my liver holds out). I am sent wines to taste regularly and I attend wine tastings all the time. If a wine is corked on these occasions, that is to say in poor condition because it has been tainted by the tree bark which is its seal, then it is not a problem for a bottle in decent condition to be quickly supplied for me to taste. This is not, alas, a luxury which can be extended to my readers.

So if you find a wine not to your taste because it seems pretty foul or 'off' in some way, then do not assume that my rating system is up the creek; you may take it that the wine is faulty and must be returned as soon as possible to its retailer. Every retailer in this book is pledged to provide an instant refund for any faulty wine returned – no questions asked. I am not asking readers to share all my tastes in wine, or to agree completely with every rating for every wine. But where a wine I have rated well is obviously and patently foul then it is a duff bottle and you should be compensated by getting a fresh bottle free or by being given a refund.

HOW I RATE A WINE

Value for money is my single unwavering focus. I drink with my readers' pockets in my mouth. I do not see the necessity of paying a lot for a bottle of everyday drinking wine and only rarely do I consider it worth paying a high price for, say, a wine for a special occasion or because you want to experience what a so called 'grand' wine may be like. There is more codswallop talked and written about wine, especially the so-called 'grand' stuff, than any subject except sex. The stench of this gobbledygook regularly perfumes wine merchants' catalogues, spices the backs of bottles, and rancidises the writings of those infatuated by or in the pay of producers of a particular wine region I do taste expensive wines regularly. I do not, regularly, find them worth the money. That said, there are some pricey bottles in these pages. They are here either because I wish to provide an accurate, but low, rating of their worth so that readers will be given pause for thought or because the wine is genuinely worth every penny. A wine of magnificent complexity, thrilling fruit, superb aroma, great depth and finesse is worth drinking. I would not expect it to be an inexpensive bottle. I will rate it highly. I wish all wines which commanded such high prices were so well deserving of an equally high rating The thing is, of course, that many bottles of wine I taste do have finesse and depth but do not come attached to an absurdly high price tag. These are the bottles I prize most. As, I hope, you will.

20 Is outstanding and faultless in all departments: smell, taste and finish in the throat. Worth the price, even if you have to take out a second mortgage.

19* A superb wine. Almost perfect and well worth the expense (if it is an expensive bottle).

18 An excellent wine but lacking that ineffable sublimity of richness and complexity to achieve the very highest rating. But superb drinking and thundering good value.

17 An exciting, well made wine at an affordable price which offers real glimpses of multi-layered richness.

16 Very good wine indeed. Good enough for *any* dinner party. Not expensive but terrifically drinkable, satisfying and multi-dimensional – properly balanced.

15 For the money, a good mouthful with real style. Good flavour and fruit without costing a packet.

14 The top end of the everyday drinking wine. Well made and to be seriously recommended at the price.

13 Good wine, true to its grape(s). Not great, but very drinkable.

12 Everyday drinking wine at a sensible price. Not exciting, but worthy.

11 Drinkable, but not a wine to dwell on. You don't wed a wine like this, though you might take it behind the bike shed with a bag of fish and chips.

10 Average wine (at a low price), yet still just about a passable mouthful. Also, wines which are terribly expensive and, though drinkable, cannot justify their high price.

9 Cheap plonk. Just about fit for parties in dustbin sized dispensers.

8 On the rough side here.

7 Good for pickling onions or cleaning false teeth.

6 Hardly drinkable except on an icy night by a raging bonfire.

5 Wine with more defects than delights

4 Not good at any price.

3 Barely drinkable.

2 Seriously did this wine come from grapes?

1 The utter pits. The producer should be slung in prison.

The rating system above can be broken down into six broad sections

0 to 10: Avoid – unless entertaining stuffy wine writer.

10, 11: Nothing poisonous but, though drinkable, rather dull.

12, 13: Above average, interestingly made. Solid rather then sensational.

14, 15, 16: This is the exceptional, hugely drinkable stuff, from the very good to the brilliant

17, 18: Really wonderful wine worth anyone's money: complex, rich, exciting.

19, 20: A toweringly brilliant world class wine of self-evident style and individuality.

PRICES

It is impossible to guarantee the price of any wine in this guide. This is why instead of printing the exact shop price, each wine is given a price bracket. This attempts to eliminate the problem of printing the wrong price for a wine. This can occur for all the usual boring but understandable reasons: inflation, economic conditions overseas, the narrow margins on some supermarket wines making it difficult to maintain consistent prices and, of course, the existence of those freebooters at the Exchequer who are liable to inflate taxes which the supermarkets cannot help but pass on. But even price bracketing is not foolproof. A wine listed in the book at, say, a lower price bracket might be on sale at a higher bracket How? Because a wine close to but under, say, £3.50 in spring when I tasted it might sneak across the border in summer. It happens rarely enough not to con cern me overmuch, but wine is an agricultural import, a sophisticated liquid food, and that makes it volatile where price is concerned. Frankly, I admire the way in which retailers have kept prices so stable for so many

years. We drink cheaper (and healthier) wine now than we did thirty years ago.

NOTE:

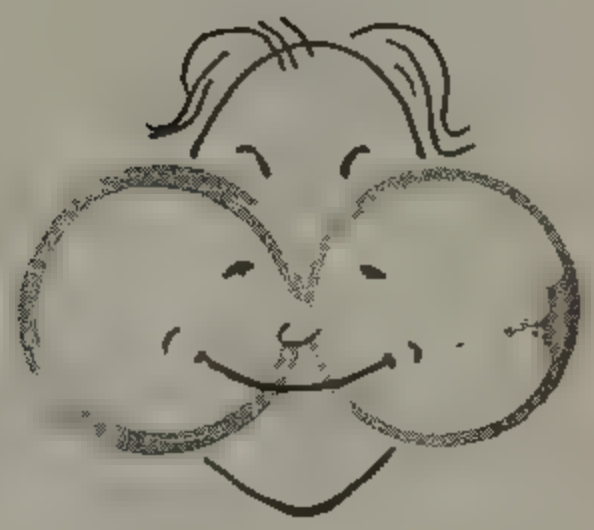
1) The prices of 3 litre wine boxes have been adjusted to their 75cl bottle equivalent.
2) Only in the Top Ten section are prices as they were given to me at time of going to press.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I drink alone, rate alone, read alone, and often eat alone – and I write alone. However, Linda Peskin is my invaluable administrative right hand. Ben Cooper does crucial research into wine retailers on my behalf and various bodies at my publisher make the annual compilation of this guide less of a nightmare than it might otherwise be and they are Martin Neild, Kate Lyall Grant, Sheila Crowley, Karen Geary, Jamie Hodder-Williams, Ian Hughes, Stewart Larking, David Brimble, Elizabeth Hallett and the brilliant Georgina Moore Felicity Rubinstein, my agent, and her partner-in-business, Sarah Lutyens, are thanked for their encouragement and will-power.

PART 1

A TO Z OF COUNTRIES



ARGENTINA

Some grand wines emanate from here, with an individuality which sets them apart from those produced by the chic vineyards the other side of the Andes. By 2012, Argentina could overhaul Germany and reach top five status among UK wine imports. It has the capacity to do this, but only if it could produce wine as cheaply as Chile could it really take Germany's position. Labour costs in Argentina are higher than Chile's which is one reason the wines are generally higher in price, but who knows? We're only talking about a quid here. A terrific Chilean chardonnay can cost £3.99, an equivalent Argentinian £4.99. Time may, as time often does, erode this differential.

ASDA RED

Argentinian Bonarda 1999, Asda 14.5 £5.00
A rampagingly rich food wine. Loads of personality and bounce.

Argentinian Pinot Noir Oak Aged 1997, Asda 12 £5.00

Argentinian Red 1998, Asda 15.5 £3.50

Argentinian Sangiovese 1999, Asda 15.5 £5.00
Stunningly well-textured and ripe. Unites warm tannins, deep fruit (hint of tobacco) and a firm, well-polished finish.

Argentinian Syrah 1999, Asda 16 £5.00
Not remotely like Aussie Shiraz or Rhône Syrah, this spicy, rich, deeply textured, well-fruited wine is a revelation. Great concentration of elements.

Far Flung Cabernet Merlot 1999 13 £5.00
So juicy and ripe.

Far Flung Malbec 1999 14 £5.00
Food wine par excellence. Curry? Aren't you fed up with curry by now?

Santa Julia Tempranillo Reserva 1999 16.5 £5–7
Delicious! Delicious! Delicious! I'll say it again . . .

Santa Julia Tempranillo Selection 1999 16 £5–7
Very savoury and rich, almost like catering chocolate and game sauce. Wonderful with rich, spicy, robust food.

BOOTHS RED

El Montonero Bonarda Barbera 1999 15.5 £5.00
Joyously juicy and bouncing with

baked fruit flavours. A marvellous companion for Indian dishes.

Finca el Retiro Malbec, Mendoza 1999 15 £5–7
Juicy with a hint of old boots in the background. Terrific with food.

Libertad Malbec Bonarda 1999 15 £5.00
Rich and ready, great for gulping and greedy to be matched with modern ethnic cuisine.

Libertad Sangiovese Malbec 1998 15 £5.00
A superb food wine which makes many a Chianti (employing the same Sangiovese grape) seem jejune and unjoyous in comparison.

Mission Peak Red NV 15.5 £3.50
Marvellous texture and rich fruit Throbs with pleasure-giving generosity and depth.

Terrazas Alto Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14.5 £5–7
Cigars, jam, herbs, tannins and blackcurrants. A rich array here.

BUDGENS RED

Etchart Rio de Plata Tempranillo/Malbec 1998 14 £5.00
Gentle yet insistent. Pacific yet ambitious. Needs spaghetti pomadoro.

CWS RED

Adiseno Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 16 £5.00
An affront to civilised values this rumbustiously rich, outspoken wine. It's hugely lovable, ripe, textured, fleshy and deep and it never shuts up. Great stuff. Superstores only.

Adiseno Tempranillo 1999 15 £5.00
Thick as a reduced wine sauce, just as meaty and rich, so pour it liberally over live tongue,

Argentine Malbec 1999, Co-op 15.5 £5.00
Throbs with exotic riches and softly engaging fruit. Really warmly textured and yielding. Great value for big supper parties

Argento Malbec 1999 16.5 £5.00
Double whammy of ripe plums and cherries with a layering of rich blackcurrants and then a hint of marzipan. A real thriller for under a fiver.

Balbi Malbec 1999 13.5 £5.00
Very juicy and ripe Best playground is spicy food.

Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 17 £7–10
A stunningly well-composed wine of restraint yet full-blooded richness. The acids and tannins supply the gule, the fruit the gentle spice and firm cassis and chocolate edging. A terrific wine for all sorts of roast bird. Superstores only.

First Ever Shiraz 2000 16 £5.00
Aussies, watch your backs! The Argentinians are growing Shiraz fruit to die for.

La Nature Organic Barbera 2000 14.5 £5.00
Wonderful freshness and bitingly plummy fruit. A terrific glugging wine and for rich pasta concoctions.

Lost Pampas Cabernet Malbec 1999, Co-op 14 –£5.00
Rich, dry, juicy.

Malbec/Bonarda Mendoza Soft Red Wine 1998 14 –£3.50

Mission Peak Argentine Red NV 15.5 –£3.50
Marvellous texture and rich fruit. Throbs with pleasure-giving generosity and depth.

Weinert Malbec 1994 16 £7–10
Again, the superb creamy tannins of Argentina give the wine distinctive richness.

Y2K Shiraz 1999 14 £5–7
Has more personality and certainly wit (dry and wry) than many an Aussie of the same savoury grape.

KWIK SAVE RED

Maranon Malbec NV 13 –£3.50

M&S RED

Rio Santos Bonarda Barbera 1999 13.5 –£5.00

Rio Santos Cabernet Syrah 1999 13.5 –£5.00
Juicy and dry – for large pasta parties

Rio Santos Malbec 1999 14 –£5.00
Some energy here – from the fruit and the tannins

MAJESTIC RED

Carrascal Cavas de Weinert 1996 14 £5–7
Jammy and ripe.

MORRISONS RED

Balbi Barbaro 1997 16 £7–10
A treat for rich game dishes. The fruit is packed with flavour – from raspberries to spiced prunes – and the tannins are electric.

Balbi Malbec 1999 13.5 –£5.00
Very juicy and ripe. Best playground is spicy food.

Balbi Shiraz 1999 13.5 –£5.00
Juicy and ripe with a hint of charcoal. Great curry wine.

Santa Julia Sangiovese Bonarda 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Packed with flavour and personality. Terrific warmth of texture and controlled, ripe blackcurrant/plum fruit with a subtle hint of spice.

ODDBINS RED

Alamos Ridge Bonarda, Mendoza 1998 16 £5–7
Bounces with ripely generous fruit.

Alamos Ridge Merlot, Mendoza 1997 16 £5–7
Ripe and ready, lovely tannins, soft juiciness relieved by a dry undertone.

Bodegas Rosca Malbec, Mendoza 1999 15 –£5.00
Ripe, savoury, meaty, mouth-filling

Bodegas Rosca Shiraz, Mendoza 1999 16.5 £5–7
McLaren Vale watch out! Here comes bargain spicy Shiraz!

Bodegas Rosca Shiraz Reserve, Mendoza 1999 16 £5–7
Goes down like the non-reserve, except it's juicier.

Famiglia Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon, San Rafael 1996 17 £13–20
Has such superb multi-layered, faintly lush cassis and cheroot tinged fruit that it surprises the palate by its developing richness on the tongue. A very classy red.

Las Lilas Malbec Sangiovese, Mendoza 1997 15.5 £4.00

Norton Reserve Syrah Cabernet, Mendoza 1997 15.5 £5–7

Valentin Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon, San Rafael 1996 16.5 £7–10
A stunningly well composed wine of restraint yet full-blooded richness. The acids and tannins supply the guile, the fruit the gentle spice and firm chocolate edging. A terrific wine for all sorts of roast bird

Valentin Bianchi Malbec Reserve, San Rafael 1996 15 £7–10

Valentin Bianchi Malbec, San Rafael 1997 16 £5.00
Bargain savoury juiciness.

Valentin Bianchi Merlot Reserve, San Rafael 1997 16.5 £7–10
One of the most elegant merlots out of South America. Superb leather and eager tannins.

SAFEWAY RED

Adiseno Bonarda 1999 15.5 £5.00
Warm, soft, spicy, and it finishes confidently and richly.

Adiseno Reserve Malbec 1999 15 £5–7
Curious fruit yoghurt edge. Needs curry. In fact, it's made for it. Selected stores

Argentinian Bonarda 1999, Safeway 14 £5.00
The perfect curry red. Also good with game dishes with sweet/savoury sauces.

Argentinian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway 14 £5.00
Juicy but this ripeness has warm tannins. It's the Argentinian wine trick – brilliant!

Argentinian Red 1999, Safeway 14 £3.50
Very simple and juicy but, hark, is that not tannins arriving? Late? But beautifully . . .

Caballo de Plata Bonarda/Barbera 2000 13 £3.50
Like a sauce for fruit salad.

Diego Murillo Malbec, Patagonia 1997 17 £5–7
Fabulous roast fowl wine. Combines rich baked spicy fruit and evolved tannins. Incredible richness.

Rafael Estate Malbec, Mendoza 1997 16 £5–7
Good heavens, what nerve! It's the cheekiest amalgam of fruit and tannin I've tasted for years. Top 212 stores.

Simonassi Lyon Barbera 1998 14 £5–7

Weinert Malbec 1994 16 £7–10
Again, the superb creamy tannins of Argentina give the wine distinctive richness. 79 stores

SAINSBURY'S RED

Alamos Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16.5 £5–7
Compellingly soft yet thickly knitted fruit of huge style and precision Incredibly well tailored yet has character and bite. Great class, terrific polish, loads of richness. Selected stores.

Argento Malbec 1999 16 £5.00
Vivacious, vivid, voluptuous. Terrific!

Bright Brothers Reserve Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5.00
A rather reserved wine at first sip and mouthing but then it shifts a bit and turns tense and tenacious. Very, very soft fruit. Not at all stores

Bright Brothers Vistalba Malbec 1999 14.5 £5.00
Extremely slip-downable. It slides past like plums on oiled rollers. Most stores.

Catena Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16.5 £7–10
A serious claret-style wine of unclaret-like lushness and depth but in its dry tannins and arching finish of rich herbiness is like a marvellous Médoc in a freak year. 50 stores.

First Ever Shiraz 2000 16 £5.00
Aussies, watch your backs! The Argentinians are growing Shiraz fruit to die for.

Mendoza Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec NV, Sainsbury's 15.5 £5.00

Mendoza Country Red NV, Sainsbury's 15 £3.50

Santa Julia Oak Aged Tempranillo 1999 15.5 £5.00
Remarkably rich and savoury, almost excessively so. Certainly not subtle, the depth of fruit is best balanced by casseroles.

Trapiche Oak Cask Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 17 £5–7
Superb class here: richness, savouriness, thickness and brilliant fruit. It is utterly lovely. 175 stores.

SOMERFIELD RED

Argentine Tempranillo 1999, Somerfield 16 £5.00
Outguns Rioja with the brilliance of its tannins and creamy richness. Great glugging, great with food.

Bright Brothers San Juan Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 16.5 £5.00
Totally convincing performance, harmonious, collected, full of subtle twists and turns. Dry, delicious, very stylish finish.

First Ever Shiraz 2000 16 £5.00
Aussies, watch your backs! The Argentinians are growing Shiraz fruit to die for.

Santa Julia Sangiovese 1999, Somerfield 15.5 £5.00

Trivento Syrah 1999 15.5 £5.00

TESCO RED

Anubis Tempranillo 1999 16 £5–7
Most individual approach to the old Spanish grape: quirky soft/hard fruit edge, dry yet soft texture and a lilting finish. 100 selected stores.

Argentinian Bonarda/Barbera 1999, Tesco 13 –£3.50
Most stores.

Argento Malbec 1999 16.5 –£5.00
Vivacious, vivid, voluptuous. Terrific!

Bright Brothers Barrica Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah 1998 15 £5–7
Juicy but justly so. Not at all stores.

Bright Brothers Barrica Reserve Syrah 1998 16 £5–7
Outguns many a fancy Aussie with the same grape. Loads of jammy rich fruit but it's the tannins which pull the whole wagonload of flavours along. Not at all stores.

Bright Brothers San Juan Reserve Cabernet/Shiraz 1998 14 –£5.00

Bright Brothers San Juan Reserve Shiraz 1998 14.5 –£5.00

Catena Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 17 £7–10
A quite compellingly concentrated amalgam of very comely Cabernet vegetality and subtle spiciness and big tannins. An excellent bottle for festive lunch (or dinner) where its presence at table will be more amusing, and more explosive, than the funniest Christmas cracker. Available at the 25 Wine Adviser Stores only.

Monster Spicy Red Syrah, Tesco 16 –£5.00
Fabulous! And it's spicy and deep and intense. A lovely rip-roaring, juicy wine with a dry underbelly of insistent richness and classiness. Great stuff.

Picajuan Peak Bonarda NV 15.5 –£5.00
Wonderful rich and invigorating jammy richness which manages to stay dry and characterful.

Picajuan Peak Malbec 1999, Tesco 14.5 –£5.00
Very good texture, warm and bright, with a fine-flowing richness of plummy fruit plus a hint of Marmite.

Picajuan Peak Sangiovese 1998, Tesco 16 –£5.00
Rich, ripe, riveting, well organised and engaging. Lovely savoury touches to the tannin, hint of plum and blackcurrant to the dry fruit. Certainly a contender for the £3 80 (and under) wine of the year.

'Q' Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 17 £7–10
Exotically warm and gently spicy and very stylishly tannic Cabernet. The cliché, blackcurrant, is given a new and exciting metaphoric definition here. 100 selected stores.

'Q' Tempranillo 1998 16.5 £7–10
This is what more Riojas should be like: energetic, rich, tobacco-tinged, deep, jammy but dry, and full of flavoursome layers of surprises.

Santa Julia Oaked Tempranillo 1997 16 –£5.00
Rioja?! Look to your laurels . . . Argentina's Tempranillo is extraordinarily delicious and beautifully textured.

THRESHER RED

Anubis Malbec 1999 16 £5–7
Juicy but with a wonderfully polished turn of speed. Tremendous texture to the fruit

Argento Malbec 1999 16.5 –£5.00

Vivacious, vivid, voluptuous. Terrific!

Corazon Bonarda 1999 16 £5.00
Superb spicy food wine which makes up for everything Beaujolais has lost: juice, freshness, personality and gushing fruit.

Corazon Tempranillo 1999 16.5 £5.00
Stunning, vivacious, exotic, sexy, concentrated and cheap – everything you could ask for in a whore or a wine.

Libertad Malbec Bonarda 1999 15 £5.00
Rich and ready, great for gulping and greedy to be matched with modern ethnic cuisine.

Libertad Malbec/ Sangiovese 1998 15 £5.00
A superb food wine which makes many a Chianti (employing the same Sangiovese grape) seem jejune and unjoyous in comparison.

Martins Andino Malbec Bonarda 1998 14 £5.00
A fat, rich, uncompromisingly fruity wine of no subtlety but great food charms.

Norton Privada 1998 16.5 £7–10
Serious, dry, dusky, subtly spicy, sustaining – excellent tannins are the reason. And food its destiny. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

'Q' Tempranillo 1998 16.5 £7–10
This is what more Riojas should be like: energetic, rich, tobacco-tinged, deep, jammy but dry, and full of flavoursome layers of surprises. Wine Rack only.

Santa Julia Pinot Noir 1999 15.5 £5.00
Delicious chewy fruit of wild cherry and cassis with a hint of earthworm Ah! The metaphors of earthiness it inspires! Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Villa Atuel Syrah 1999 15.5 £5.00
Vivid richness, underpinned by soft, dry tannins. Great for casseroles and also vegetative pursuits (sofas, Beethoven, Luis Borges, *The Times* crossword).

UNWINS RED

J & F Lurton Bonarda/ Tempranillo 1998 10 £5.00
Anodyne.

Magdalena River Malbec/ Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendoza 1997 13 £5.00

Magdalena River Sangiovese/Bonarda, Mendoza 1998 12 £5.00

Norton Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15 £5.00
Great food wine with its extravagance of fruit with perfectly matched tannins

Santa Julia Malbec Oak Reserve 1998 16 £5–7
Quirky, ripe, rich, deep – jammy but controlled – and supported by wonderful tannins and acids

Santa Julia Tempranillo Oak Reserve 1998 17 £5–7
Incredibly well and warmly textured, warm and gently spicy. Outstanding tannins and complex fruit.

Terrazas Malbec 1999 15 £5–7
Nice ripe attack which doesn't go

gooey or flabby at the knees as the fruit softens.

VICTORIA WINE RED

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Vivacious, vivid, voluptuous. Terrific!

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WAITROSE RED

Familia Zuccardi 'Q' Merlot 1998 16.5 £7.10
Saucy, irreverent, ripe, dry-humoured, potent, completely delicious.

Finca el Retiro Malbec, Mendoza 1999 15.5 £5–7
Juicy with a hint of old boots in the background. Terrific with food.

Finca el Retiro Tempranillo, Mendoza 1999 15 £5–7
Very deep, almost mud-like in its adhesive texture and so savoury it must be drunk with food.

Sierra Alta Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec, Mendoza 1999 14 £5.00

Sierra Alta Shiraz, Mendoza 1999 16.5 £5.00
Brilliant richness and smoothness and with plenty to occupy nose and throat. A gently throbbing undertone of excitement here

Trivento Sangiovese, Mendoza 1999 15 £5.00
The most brilliant pasta partner you can imagine. Terrific tannins here.

ASDA WHITE

Argentinian Chardonnay 1998, Asda 15.5 £5.00

Argentinian White NV, Asda 14 £3.50

Far Flung Viognier 1999 16 ~£5.00
Wonderfully soft, subtly spicy peach and apricot fruit. Delicious

BOOTHS WHITE

El Montonero Torrontes 1999 15 ~£5.00
Delicious floral-scented aperitif.

Libertad Chenin/Sauvignon 1999 14.5 ~£5.00
Lemon, melon and lettuce leaf acidity. Great with food.

Terrazas Alto Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5–7
Very woody and creamy, a hint of cauliflower, touch of raspberry, suggestion of yoghurt on the lingering finish.

BUDGENS WHITE

Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes 1999 13.5 ~£3.50
Plain on the finish.

Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes/Chardonnay 1998 13 ~£5.00
I find, sometimes, the Torrontes grape has an unattractive cosmetic edge.

CWS WHITE

Argentine Sauvignon/Chenin Blanc 1998 15 ~£3.50

Balbi Shiraz Rosé 1999 14 ~£5.00
Fruit lover's dream. Classic dry rosé lover's nightmare. Superstores only.

Bright Brothers Viognier Reserve 1999 15 £5–7
Hint of ripe peach and honey to the dry fruit which finishes softly. Co-op Superstores only.

Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Mild and inoffensive. Churlish to say more. Superstores only

First Ever Chardonnay 2000 13.5 ~£5.00
Most underwhelming – but drinkable.

La Nature Organic Torrontes 2000 15.5 ~£5.00
Compellingly crisp, compacted and classy. Has a chewy edge of striking originality.

Lost Pampas Oaked Chardonnay 1999, Co-op 14 ~£5.00
Lovely nutty fruit, chewy and fresh, hint of lettuce crispness.

Mission Peak Argentine White NV 15.5 ~£3.50
Delicious rich fruit. An absolute bargain.

Y2K Chardonnay, San Juan 1999 16 ~£5.00
Very fresh – saves its melon richness for the back of the throat.

M&S WHITE

Rio Santos Torrontes 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Another crisp clean wine from M&S. Formula?

MORRISONS WHITE

Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes/Chardonnay 1998 13 ~£5.00
I find, sometimes, the Torrontes grape has an unattractive cosmetic edge.

Rio de Plata Chardonnay 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

Tupungato Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's 13 ~£5.00

ODDBINS WHITE

Alamos Ridge Chardonnay 1997 16 £5–7
Superb chewy texture and ripe, woody fruit.

Bodegas Rosca Dry White, Mendoza 1999 15 ~£3.50
Fantastic value: very subtle smoky/creamy fruit which finishes with verve and dash.

Catena Chardonnay 1997 14 £7.10
Expensive compared with many other compatriots.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Argentinian Chardonnay 1999, Safeway 16 ~£5.00
Delightful union of buttery ripeness, and melon and pineapple acidity.

Caballo de Plata Torrontes 2000 13.5 ~£3.50
Very cosmetic and talcum powdery, as the Torrontes often is, I find.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Bright Brothers San Juan Chardonnay Reserve 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Terrific freshness of fruit and great with food. Not at all stores.

First Ever Chardonnay 2000 13.5 £5.00
Most underwhelming – but drinkable

Mendoza Country White NV, Sainsbury's 14.5 ~£3.50

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Argentine Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 16 ~£5.00
Wonderfully rich, buttery fruit almost savoury in its depth.

Bright Brothers Argentine Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 16 ~£5.00
Superb richness and nuttiness here. Has a gentility to its lushness so it's not OTT, and the texture is outstanding.

Bright Brothers San Juan Chardonnay Reserve 1999 15.5 ~£5.00

First Ever Chardonnay 2000 13.5 ~£5.00
Most underwhelming – but drinkable.

Santa Julia Syrah Rosé 2000 15.5 ~£5.00
Great cherry fruit with a hint of plum jam. Great with food. Don't let the colour put you off – it reminds me of adolescent medicines I was forced to endure.

TESCO WHITE

Argentinian Torrontes 1999, Tesco 13 ~£3.50

Argento Chardonnay 1999 17 ~£5.00
What class for the money here. Combines melons, ripe pineapples, pears, raisins and delicate acids to great effect. Fine, frolicsome, cheap, and so cheerfully complex that you smile as

you sip – as this is a sipping wine, such is its provocative approach (soft). Not at all stores

Picajuan Peak Viognier 1999 15 £5.00
Rich and deep to begin then peachy and lemonic as it descends the gullet. Delicious tippling here.

THRESHER WHITE

Corazon Pinot Gris 1999 15 £5.00
Remarkable apricot fruit. Dry, dainty, delicious derring-do.

Correas Torrontes Chardonnay 1999 14 £5.00
A good, solid, no-frills food wine.

Norton Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
Fantastic plumpness and richness of purpose. Wonderful baked melon vinosity, soft textured acids and a gorgeous finish.

Norton Torrontes, Mendoza 1999 15.5 £5.00
Delightfully elegant and gentle, pastry-edged fruit. Marvellously generous tippling.

Santa Julia Viognier 1999 17 £5.00
A remarkably well-textured, subtly smoky, apricot/peach and cherry-rich wine which is never less than stylish and insistent. It's remarkably lovely for a fiver. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

UNWINS WHITE

Alamos Ridge Chardonnay 1997 16 £5–7
Superb chewy texture and ripe, woody fruit.

Catena Agrelo Vineyards Chardonnay 1997 14 £7–10
Expensive compared with many other compatriots.

J & F Lurton Pinot Gris 1998 13 £5.00

Magdalena River Chardonnay, Mendoza 1997 15 £5.00

Santa Julia Oak Reserve Chardonnay 1997 16.5 £5–7
Sheer unadulterated luxury of fruit: rich, thick, aromatic, impactful, massively elegant.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Corazon Pinot Gris 1999 15 £5.00
Remarkable apricot fruit. Dry, dainty, delicious derring-do.

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Delightfully elegant and gentle, pastry-edged fruit. Marvellously generous tippling.

WAITROSE WHITE

Bodega Lurton Pinot Gris, Mendoza 1999 14.5 £5.00
Handsome, correct, well-cut, gently warm on the finish.

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Santa Julia Viognier ~~16.5~~ ~~£5.47~~
Reserve 1999
So elegant! Yet plump and smooth and subtly apricotty.

AUSTRALIA

The revelations concerning just one producer, Kingston Estate (who were caught using banned substances to remove the smell of rotten eggs from wine and employing red grape skins to turn white wine into something less flabby), are minor blemishes in the Aussie wine miracle. New vineyards are being planted, and the creation of more expensive, status seeking reds continues. Between £6 and £10, this is the country whose red and white bottles most unnerve the French.

ASDA RED

Andrew Peace Cabernet/ Merlot 1999 15 £5–7
If this is Cabernet as grown in Bordeaux I'm a monkey's uncle. (I have the hairy armpits to prove it.)

Andrew Peace Mighty Murray 1999 13 £5.00

Andrew Peace Shiraz 1999 13 £5–7
So jammy and fleshy and ripe.

Fox River Pinot Noir 1998 13 £5–7

Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/ Shiraz 1997 14 £5–7

Hardys Stamp Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1997 15 £5–7
Hints of developed tannin to the jammy ripeness. Good with roast meats and cheese dishes

Houghtons Shiraz 1998 15 £5–7
Sweet, dry to finish. Brilliant with food.

Karalta Cabernet 1999, Asda 12 £5.00
Even sweeter!!!

Karalta Red 1999, Asda 13.5 £3.50
Intensely juicy and sunny. Very ripe.

Karalta Shiraz/Cabernet 1999, Asda 13 £3.50
Even sweeter!!

Lindemans Bin 50 Shiraz 1998 14.5 £5.00
Simply delicious!

Maglieri Shiraz 1998 15.5 £7–10
The immense charm of the rich sweet wine is irresistible.

Mount Hurtle Grenache 1997 16 £5–7
Rated eaten with Indian food. It is the greatest curry wine in the world and indeed the food will struggle to keep up with it. Chillies will only enhance the awesome solidity of the rich, dark fruit which is like a melted chocolate in texture. Very alcoholic (14.5%) and this gives it aromatic wallop and sweetness.

Peter Lehmann Seven Surveys Mourvedre/ Shiraz/Grenache 1997 16 £5–7
Intense, invuncible, insidiously drinkable, impish, insistent, inevitable – aye, aye, aye.

Rochcombe Pinot Noir 1998 12 £5–7
Very juicy Pinot. No backbone.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1997 15 £7–10

Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1998 15.5 £5–7

Rymill Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon/Cabernet Franc 1996 15.5 £7–10
Very sveltely ripe and at the peak of drinkability.

Secession Xanadu Shiraz/ Cabernet 1999 14.5 £5–7
Very warm and soft.

South Australia Cabernet Sauvignon 1996, Asda 14 £5.00

Vine Vale Grenache 1998 (Peter Lehmann) 15 £5–7
Another Asda Aussie Grenache which defies gravity and goes up the throat rather than down

BOOTHS RED

Australian Red Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Booths 14 £5.00
Typical, hot-blooded fruit – hints of plums, figs and raisins

Australian Red, South Eastern Australia NV, Booths 11 £3.50

Brown Brothers Tarrango 1998 13 £5.00

CV Capel Vale Shiraz 1997 14.5 £7–10
Juicy – sorry, but there it is, it's juicy and very immediately all-embracing.

d'Arenberg d'Arrys Original Shiraz/Grenache 1998 15 £5–7

Ironstone Shiraz Grenache 1998 16.5 £5–7
Deliciously concentrated and incisive. Rich, deep, ready, ripe (but not OTT), full of interesting fruits (including a hint of liquorice) and it finishes fully and profoundly.

Knappstein Cabernet Franc 1998 15 £7–10
Tang of raspberry to the rich plums. Very satisfying quaffing bottle.

Marktree Premium Red 1998 11 £5.00
My God – if this is the premium, what's that basic stuff like? Sally, what's going on here?

Penfolds Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 15 £10–13
Pricey and a touch po-faced. But the tannins are good, even if they might have been added to the wine, and the subtle eucalyptus richness is impressive.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15.5 £5–7

Wakefield Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5–7
Subtle spicy hints here to some gentle rugged, dry, superbly tannic fruit. Very elegant and so easy to glug.

Yaldara Grenache 1998 13.5 £5–7

BUDGENS RED

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 14 £5–7
Terrific! One of Australia's top-notch brands on the basis of its rich texture, good layers of fruit, warm, friendly tannins, and overall lushly impactful structure. An adults Shiraz of great charm and persistence.

Wolf Blass Yellow Label Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 £7–10
The essence of the Oz success story. Rip-roaringly rich, soft, jammy fruit with just enough tannins to remind you it's wine.

Wynns Coonawarra Shiraz 1997 16.5 £5–7
A most invigorating mouthful of very high class fruit. The mineral tanginess is delicious but what really impresses is the way the fruit spreads itself over the tongue revealing dry, rich nuances Has superb tannins.

CWS RED

Australian Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Co-op 14 ~£5.00
Super juice with a savoury finish.

Australian Grenache 1999, Co-op 14 ~£5.00
Bit tardy on the fruit, the acids get in first, and the manner is jumpy and nervous. But with food, it would settle down and even have children.

Australian Merlot 1999, Co-op 13.5 ~£5.00
Very juicy and ripe.

Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999 13.5 £5–7
Juicy! Needs spicy food. Superstores only.

Chateau Reynella Basket Press Cabernet Merlot 1996 16.5 £10–13
Interestingly, I saw the grapes for this wine go into the old-fashioned basket press – the device which permits such a sympathetic crush and beautifully evolved tannins to emerge. One of Australia's most civilised Cabernet Merlots.

E & E Black Pepper Shiraz 1996 16 £20+
Complex perfume of tea, chocolate and very subtle cinnamon. The fruit is very tufted and textured but ultimately polished and unturbulent, but £27? It's a lot of money. But this is a lot of wine. It is rugged yet refined. Superstores only.

Hardys Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 16 £10–13
Soupy yet with savoury tannins which keep it adult and x-rated. The seductiveness of the perfume is only the beginning.

Hardys Stamp Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1997 15 £5–7
Hints of developed tannin to the jammy ripeness. Good with roast meats and cheese dishes.

Leasingham Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec 1996 16.5 £7.10
The marriage of the wood, fruit and tannins is a sensual ménage à trois of guile and gutsiness. Superstores only.

Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1998 15* £5–7

KWIK SAVE RED

Australian Dry Red 1999, Somerfield 14.5 £5.00
Jammy yet not OTT. Great with spicy food

Australian Shiraz Cabernet 1999, Somerfield 15 £5.00
Delicious, quite quite delicious. Thick as a woolly sweater, just as warming.

Banrock Station Shiraz Mataro 1999 15 £5.00
Jammy, thick and hugely food friendly.

Hardys Stamp Shiraz Cabernet 1999 14 £5.00
Sweet and rich? Curry? Sorry to go on about curries, but what else is one to do with a wine like this?

M&S RED

Australian Shiraz 1999 15 £5–7
The chewy touch of the tannins gives the jam some backbone of resistant spreadability.

Fusion Shiraz 1998 16 £5–7
Heavens to Murgatroyd! An under-six quid Aussie Shiraz with exciting tannins. Has spice and hedgerow fruit too.

HoneyTree Grenache Shiraz 1999 13 £5–7
Juice.

HoneyTree Reserve Pinot Noir 1998 13 £7–10
I've never tasted a Pinot so untypical. Listen to me!! You old fart! What's wrong with a break from the straitjacket of convention? Nothing. You just have to *like* them, that's all.

HoneyTree Shiraz Cabernet 1999 15.5 £5–7

HoneyTree Shiraz Reserve 1998 14 £7–10

Shiraz Ruby Cabernet Merlot Bin 312 1999 12.5 £5.00
Very juicy.

South East Australian Cabernet 1999 14 £5.00
Very available and free with its charm. All juice. Not a subtle bone in its body.

South East Australian Merlot 1999 13.5 £5.00

MAJESTIC RED

Bethany Cabernet Merlot 1998 14 £7–10
One in the sweet line. Has even a toasted marshmallow subtlety to it – but it's easy to miss.

Bethany Grenache 1998 13 £5–7
So terribly sweet.

Capel Vale 'CV' Pinot Noir 1998 13 £7–10

Capel Vale 'CV' Shiraz 1998 14.5 £7–10
Curious, nervous, stringy edge.

Capel Vale Howecroft Cabernet 1996 15.5 £13–20
Curiously bruised fruit ripeness on the finish somehow mars any claim to elegance but it does have presence – and with food it would spring several delicious surprises.

Ironstone Shiraz Grenache, Margaret River and Swan Valley 1996 16.5 £5–7
Takes Shiraz into a new dimension of

such balance of fruit, acid and tannin, all so deftly interwoven and gorgeously textured, that it makes offerings from other Oz regions seem either mean or too expensive. It's a terrific wine with a hint of wildness.

Kangarilla Road Cabernet, Cabernet Franc, Malbec 1998 14 £7-10
Very sweet and cosily modulated.

Kangarilla Road Shiraz 1998 15.5 £7-10
Immensely elegant and richly polished – indeed so polished is it that it reflects every facet of its maker's personality.

Mamre Brook Cabernet Shiraz 1996 16 £5-7
At its peak of savoury smoothness and richness. Lovely texture and temperature: warm but not steamy.

Mirrabrook Shiraz Cabernet 1999 12 £3.50
Good value happy juice.

Mount Langi Ghiran Shiraz Grenache 1997 13 £7-10
Juice.

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5-7
Terrific! One of Australia's top-notch brands on the basis of its rich texture, good layers of fruit, warm, friendly tannins, and overall lushly impactful structure. An adults Shiraz of great charm and persistence.

Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz 1996 15.5 £7-10
Lush, rich, usual Penfolds recipe for this sort of turn out. Correct and controlled. Makes for a delicious companion to casseroles.

Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 1996 15.5 £7-10
Minty and rich. Good tight finish with some spice and controlled, dry richness up front.

Penfolds Bin 389 Coonawarra Cabernet Shiraz 1996 16 £10-13
Lovely blend of vegetal, tannic cabernet with the spicy shiraz. It has a terrific texture and a warm, coaxing finish

Penfolds Bin 407 Coonawarra Cabernet 1996 15 £10-13
Pricey and a touch po-faced. But the tannins are good, even if they might have been added to the wine, and the subtle eucalyptus richness is impressive.

Penfolds Old Vine Syrah Grenache Mourvedre, Barossa 1996 13.5 £7-10
Too expensive for juice, even high class juice.

Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Bin 35 Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz/Ruby Cabernet 1998 14 £5-7
Soft and curry-friendly.

Pirramimma Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 17 £7-10
Intensely concentrated and deep, it has a lovely textured tightness which opens up deliberately and deliciously with stunning tannins.

Pirramimma Petit Verdot 1997 17 £7-10
Tremendous stuff. Really races over the taste buds sweeping all before it. It has a sullen spiciness of the Greta Garbo sort, at first, then the huge

tannins arrive and it's one long torrent of riches

Pirramimma Premium Shiraz 1997 15.5 £7–10
Cough mixture tang and linctus-thick richness. Marvellous chutzpah to it Quite iconoclastic and individual. Needs very robust spicy food. A curry?

Pirramimma Stocks Hill Shiraz 1998 16 £5–7
More character than most inexpensive Aussie shirazes: richness and depth with real, elongated hedgerow sweetness. Good balance

Rymill Coonawarra Cabernet 1996 12.5 £7–10
Too creamy and thick.

Rymill Coonawarra Shiraz 1996 12 £7–10
Stale Bovril.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14 £5–7
A cab to take to oriental food. It has a quirky spiciness of its own.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Merlot 1999 15 £5–7
A deeply sunburnt, soft and savourily leather skinned Merlot – very Aussie, very accommodating with food

Woodstock McLaren Vale Grenache 1997 13 £7–10

Woodstock 'The Stocks' McLaren Shiraz 1996 10 £10–13
Just juice with attitude.

MORRISONS RED

Barramundi Shiraz/ Merlot NV 15.5 £–£5.00

Cranswick Kidman Way Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £–£5.00
Touch sweet but good with food.

Cranswick Nine Pines Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5.00
A bit resinated, very dry and tannic, but with an ostrich casserole it might be a marvel.

Deakin Estate Merlot 1998 15 £5–7
Getting juicy as it matures and the leather is softening to jam – congealing you might say.

Hardys Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1998 15 £5–7
Big and jammy but has civilised tannins to give it backbone and bite.

Jindalee Shiraz 1998 13 £–£5.00
Very sweet and sticky.

Lindemans Bin 45 Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15 £5–7
Jammy yet not OTT, fruity yet not overly adolescent, this is a reasonably entertaining adult beverage – for blackcurrant lovers

'M' Australian Shiraz Cabernet NV 10 £–£5.00
Not good enough, not typical, too rushed, too clumsy on the finish.

Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998 14 £5–7
Very sweet vintage, '98, and it's getting sweeter

Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998 15.5 £7–10
Hints of savouriness impinge on the great juicy depths.

Thomas Mitchell Shiraz 1998 13 £5–7

Dry, bit flat as it hits the taste buds, tannins ho-hum.

ODDBINS RED

Annie's Lane Shiraz, Clare Valley 1997 13 £7–10

Baileys Shiraz 1997 14 £5–7
Baileys has stopped being a tannic tyrant and become a simpering fat-boy idiot – trying to be sweet and entertaining. It's not good news.

Brokenwood Shiraz 1998 15 £7–10
Odd dry savoury frontal attack which turns very jammy on the finish.

Cape Jaffa Mount Benson Shiraz 1998 13 £7–10
Too juicy and raisiny ripe for me.

Church Block Cabernet Shiraz Merlot, Wirra Wirra Vineyards 1998 17 £7–10
Wonderful brisk tannins coat the chocolate and cassis fruit. Marvellous stuff Benchmark blend

d'Arenberg The Footbolt Old Vine Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998 15.5 £5–7

d'Arry's Original Shiraz Grenache, McLaren Vale 1997 16 £5–7
Rampant fruit which takes no prisoners. Lovely stuff to match against an old style coq au vin.

Deakin Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Victoria 1999 15.5 £5–7
Juicy, baked-fruit edge. Delicious with rich food.

Deakin Estate Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon, Victoria 1999 15 £5.00
Blackcurrant and plum jam meets ripe tannins. The aroma is salivatory

Deakin Estate Shiraz, Victoria 1999 15 £5–7
Free-flowing and energetic. Very soft and ripe but not over-cooked.

E & C Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale 1998 16 £5–7
Sheer heaven-juice. Touch of spice, hint of liquorice. Very lush, intensely lovable.

E & C Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998 15.5 £5–7
Touch of menthol to the beautifully soft, rich fruit which smacks of plums/blackberries and dates

Elderton Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa 1996 16 £10–13
Has a handsome garnut of flavours running from dry and savoury to rich and sweet. Fine Wine Stores.

Elderton Merlot, Barossa 1996 14 £13–20
Fine Wine Stores only.

Elderton Shiraz, Barossa 1996 17 £10–13
Hums and literally vibrates with spicy, savoury fruit of massive depth. Fine Wine Stores

Elderton Tantalus Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5–7
The very essence of what so many palates exult in with soft, ripe Aussie Shiraz and Cab

Hillstowe 'Buxton' Cabernet Merlot, McLaren Vale 1998 15 £7–10
Very juicy, though the aroma is unusually savoury and enticing.

Hillstowe Udy's Mill Pinot Noir, Lenswood 1997 14 £7–10

Mamre Brook Cabernet Shiraz 1996 16 £5–7
At its peak of savoury smoothness and richness. Lovely texture and temperature: warm but not steamy.

Merrill's Mount Hurtle Bush Vine Grenache, McLaren Vale 1996 13.5 £5–7

Normans White Label Cabernet Sauvignon, South Eastern Australia 1998 13 £5–7

Normans White Label Merlot, South Australia 1998 13 £5–7

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5–7
Terrific! One of Australia's top-notch brands on the basis of its rich texture, good layers of fruit, warm, friendly tannins, and overall lushly impactful structure. An adults' Shiraz of great charm and persistence.

Penny's Hill Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998 16* £7–10*
Quintessential, quantastic, quashy, quaint, quagmirish fruit. A long queue of attributes.

Peter Lehmann The Barossa Shiraz 1998 17 £5–7
Quite the best value Shiraz from Australia I can think of: dry, elegant, deep, beautifully textured.

Preece Shiraz 1997 15.5 £3–7
Curious, very subtle tang, almost malt whisky like, but though an eccentric wine it'll be marvellous with staid food – like tofu hamburger with chillies

Rufus Stone Heathcote Shiraz, Victoria 1998 14.5 £10–13
Very juicy and ripe for twelve quid.

Rufus Stone Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998 16.5 £7–10
Gorgeous sticky tannins and tenacious fruit. So everything not only works together but stays together.

Tatachilla Shiraz, South Australia 1998 15.5 £5–7

Wirra Wirra Original Blend Grenache Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1997 16.5 £7–10
Lovely lingering depths of cigar-tinged fruit. Also has some catering chocolate and some superb layers of berries and solid tannins. Exceptional wine.

Wirra Wirra Vineyards The Angelus Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 13 £10–13
Fine Wine Stores only.

Wirra Wirra W2 Grenache Shiraz Cabernet 1999 15 £5–7
Juicy but not injudicious

Yarra Valley Hills Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 15 £10–13

Yarra Valley Hills Warranwood Pinot Noir 1998 14 £7–10

SAFEWAY RED

Australian Oaked Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway 14.5 £5.00
Oak? Can't spot it myself. Mostly I was rushed off my taste buds by the lushness of the blackberries.

Australian Oaked Shiraz 1999, Safeway 14 ~£5.00
The usual Aussie fruit juice – with attitude

Australian Shiraz 1999, Safeway 15 ~£5.00
The juicy version of Syrah. Very warm and virile.

Australian Shiraz/Ruby Cabernet 1999, Safeway 14 ~£5.00
Very jammy but the texture is so thick it contains this rich onslaught very well. Great with rich spicy foods.

Basedow Bush Vine Grenache 1998 15 £5–7
Serenely well fruited and calmly charming. Selected stores.

Capel Vale Shiraz 1998 14 £7–10
Curious, nervous, stringy edge

Clancy's Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/ Cabernet Franc 1998 17 £7–10
Perfection at its peak – almost. Will it rate higher? How can it? It has wonderfully integrated generous tannins and plum/cherry/blackberry fruit.

Dawn Ridge Australian Red (3 litre box) 15 ~£3.50
Price band reflects the 75cl equivalent

Endeavour Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 13 £7–10
Very juicy.

Evans & Tate Shiraz 1999 16.5 £7–10
Concentrated, nutty, figgy richness of delicacy yet considerable weight of purpose

Geoff Merrill Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 15 £10–13
An expensive Christmas treat. Very dry, classy, haughty stuff. Selected stores.

Hardys Stamp of Australia Shiraz Cabernet 1999 14 ~£5.00
Very ripe and all-embracing, hardly subtle (maybe they should change the name of the company).

Haselgrove 'Bentwing' Shiraz, Wrattonbully 1998 14 £7–10
Extremely ripe and soft and with a very faint mineral undertone. Very textured and thick. Selected stores

Haselgrove Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998 14 £7–10
Thick knitted plummy fruit with a hint of spice. Selected stores.

Jindalee Shiraz, Murray-Darling Region 1998 13 ~£5.00

Knappstein Cabernet/ Merlot 1998 16.5 £7–10
Runs away with itself but stays in control of one's taste buds. Bright, bonny, textured, serious mid-palate polish and plummy flavours, and an elegant finish. Lovely wine here.

Koltz LFD Shiraz 1998 16 £7–10
Savoury bite to the tannins is superb and gives the rampant fruit a run for its money. An outstanding Aussie Shiraz. 70 stores.

Lindemans Pyrus Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot/Cabernet France 1997 16.5 £13–20
One of Coonawarra's most elegant reds. Marvellous soft tannins to the cassis and thyme fruit.

Mamre Brook Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15 £7–10

Oh God! How much more Aussie juicy-fruit can a mortal stand!? (But I love it really.) Top 70 stores

Mamre Brook Cabernet Shiraz 1996 16 £5–7
At its peak of savoury smoothness and richness. Lovely texture and temperature: warm but not steamy.

Masterpeace Shiraz Malbec 2000 14 £5–7
Curiously medicinal tang to the soft, ripe fruit. An odd blend of Bordeaux and Rhone grapes which would turn a Frenchman's hair white with incomprehension (it made my hair curl, too).

Metala Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 14 £5–7
An expensive tandoori chicken red.

Oxford Landing Limited Release Shiraz 1998 13.5 £5–7
A very juicy Shiraz. But that's Oxford Landing all over.

Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz 1996 15.5 £7–10
Lush, rich, usual Penfolds recipe for this sort of turn out. Correct and controlled. Makes for a delicious companion to casseroles. 70 stores.

Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 1996 16 £10–13
Lovely blend of vegetal, tannic Cabernet with the spicy Shiraz. It has a terrific texture and a warm, coaxing finish. Top 36 stores.

Penfolds Organic Merlot Shiraz Cabernet 1998 15.5 £7–10
Rather detached tannins as if stuck on later, but there's no gainsaying the delicious ripe plumptitude of the rousing plummy fruit.

Peter Lehmann The Barossa Shiraz 1998 17 £5–7
Oh, it's so savoury and ripe yet so elegantly purposeful. A quite gorgeous artefact providing rivulets of rich flavours

Riddoch Cabernet Shiraz 1998 16 £7–10
It's the mineral limey edge which sets it apart. Distinctive and very delicious. Selected stores

Rosemount Estate Grenache Shiraz 1998 15 £5–7

Rosemount Estate Merlot 1998 13 £7–10

Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998 15.5 £7–10
Hints of savouriness impinge on the great juicy depths.

Rosemount Estate Show Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 13 £13–20

Rosemount 'Hill of Gold' Shiraz, Mudgee 1998 17.5 £7–10
At last! A Rosemount red with world-class tannins. And it's under a tenner Beautifully well knit fruit here, totally captivating, and the texture is gripping, grand, and you feel greedy for more.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14 £5–7
A Cab to take to oriental food. It has a quirky spiciness of its own.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Merlot 1999 15 £5–7
A deeply sunburnt, soft and savourily leather skinned Merlot – very Aussie, very accommodating with food.

Tatachilla 'Foundation' Shiraz 1998 16 £13–20
Very tangy and ripe, hint of almond and raisin, but overall it's the impressive build of the tannins which gives it its evident class.

Tatachilla Padthaway Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £7–10
The essence of ripe, dry, richly flowing Aussie Cab. Sheer hedonism liquefied. Selected stores.

Wirrega Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon/ Petit Verdot 1999 16 £5–7
Terrific mineral aroma, jammy fruit, nice simple tannins. An unpretentiously delicious specimen.

Wirrega Vineyards Shiraz 1999 16.5 £5–7
Stunning impact with its compelling layers of generous fruit of great style and warmly textured richness. Absolutely terrific finish.

Woolshed Cabernet/ Shiraz/Merlot, Coonawarra 1998 17 £5–7
Stunning richness and textured, tangy fruit of huge depth and charm. Multi-layered and magnificently mouth-watering. Top 220 stores.

SAINSBURY'S RED

Australian Shiraz 1999, Sainsbury's 15.5 £5.00
Totally gluggable and generously fruity. Extremely well balanced and very well finished off. An excellent example of what Oz can still do for under a fiver. Most stores.

Banrock Station Mataro Shiraz NV, (3 litre box) 14.5 £5.00
Preferable to the bottled product, it seems freer here, more flowing and not so tarrily rich and cloying A very thick wine which loves food. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Banrock Station Shiraz Mataro 1999 15 £5–7
Well, it's a lot better built than the '98 which was like chewing toffee. This is thick but has some energy to it. Very soft and ripe, though. (Just like toffee.) Most stores.

Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999 13.5 £5–7
Juicy! Needs spicy food.

Hardys Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1998 15 £5–7
Big and jammy but has civilised tannins to give it backbone and bite. Most stores

Hardys Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 16 £10–13
Soupy yet with savoury tannins which keep it adult and x rated. The seductiveness of the perfume is only the beginning.

Hardys Stamp of Australia Shiraz Cabernet 1999 14 £5.00
Very ripe and all-embracing, hardly subtle (maybe they should change the name of the company). Selected stores.

Leasingham Domaine Shiraz 1996 15 £7–10

Lindemans Bin 45 Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15 £5–7
Jammy yet not OTT, fruity yet not overly adolescent, this is a reasonably entertaining adult beverage – for blackcurrant lovers. Selected stores

Lindemans Cawarra Merlot 1999 12 ~£5.00
So sweet! Needs . . . yes, you guessed it, a big fat curry.

Lindemans Cawarra Merlot Shiraz Ruby Cabernet 1999 12 ~£5.00
Junior league stuff. Most stores.

Lindemans Limestone Coast Shiraz 1998 15.5 £5–7
Lovely tang of limestone to it. Rich, blackberryish, ripe – yet very elegant. Selected stores

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5–7
Terrific! One of Australia's top-notch brands on the basis of its rich texture, good layers of fruit, warm, friendly tannins, and overall lushly impactful structure. An adults' Shiraz of great charm and persistence.

Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 1997 16.5 £10–13
Very forward and full, big and deep, and with soft, accelerated tannins which evolve by delicious degrees on the taste buds. Selected stores.

Petaluma Bridgewater Mill Shiraz 1997 15 £7–10
Full of juicy riches which stay the plummy side of baked pie-ness. Not at all stores

Petaluma Coonawarra Cabernet Merlot 1997 16.5 £13–20
Stunning whirl of complex tannins and warm, rich fruit. Deliciously intrusive on the palate – excitingly so – it trumpets its way so happily to the throat – and beyond. 10 stores.

Rosemount Estate Cabernet Merlot 1999 15 £5–7
Has some plump ripe plums, very soft and delicious, intermingled with which are some handsomely intrusive tannins. 50 stores

Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1999 15 £5–7
Intense hedgerow sweetness. Very juicy. Most stores.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998 15.5 £7–10
Hints of savouriness impinge on the great juicy depths. Most stores.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1999 15.5 £5–7
Hugely friendly, it's archetypical Aussie Shiraz and really defines what this grape means at this price from this region. Most stores.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14 £5–7
A Cab to take to oriental food. It has a quirky spiciness of its own.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Merlot 1999 15 £5–7
A deeply sunburnt, soft and savourily leather skinned Merlot – very Aussie, very accommodating with food.

Tyrrells Old Winery Cabernet Merlot 1998 13.5 £5–7
Juicy, so juicy. Not at all stores.

Wynns Coonawarra Shiraz 1997 16.5 £5–7
Gripping elegance and polished fruit here. Has a mineral edge, great plummy richness and lovely soft tannins. Selected stores.

SOMERFIELD RED

Australian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Somerfield 15.5 –£5.00
Has everything that claret would give its eye teeth for. (Including the tannins which cling to the same teeth.)

Australian Dry Red 1999, Somerfield 14.5 –£5.00
Jammy yet not OTT. Great with spicy food.

Australian Shiraz Cabernet 1999, Somerfield 15 –£5.00
Delicious, quite quite delicious. Thick as a woolly sweater, just as warming

Banrock Station Shiraz Mataro 1999 15 –£5.00
Jammy, thick and hugely food friendly.

Hardys Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1998 15 £5–7
Big and jammy but has civilised tannins to give it backbone and bite.

Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/ Shiraz 1999 16.5 £5–7
Under six quid, one of Aussie's best big red wine bargains. Thrilling tannins and subtle spiciness.

Hardys Stamp Shiraz Cabernet 1999 14 –£5.00
Sweet and rich? Curry? Sorry to go on about curries, but what else is one to do with a wine like this?

Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 1997 17 £7–10
Quite gorgeous and uplifting. It smothers the palate with prunes, blackberries and liquorice, and then lifts the heart.

Penfolds Coonawarra Bin 128 Shiraz 1996 15.5 £7–10
Lush, rich, usual Penfolds recipe for this sort of turn out. Correct and controlled. Makes for a delicious companion to casseroles

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £5–7
Superb quality and this is the best vintage yet of this well-established brand. Superb fruit, great texture.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998 15.5 £7–10
Hints of savouriness impinge on the great juicy depths.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1998 15.5 £5–7

SPAR RED

Australian Shiraz Cabernet 1998, Spar 13.5 –£5.00
An excellent pasta wine. Unusually dry for an Aussie at this price.

Hardys Bankside Shiraz 1997 16.5 £7–10
By far the best red I've tasted at Spar. Good age, lovely rich fruit (savoury and spicy) and lovely tannins.

TESCO RED

Australian Cabernet/ Merlot NV, Tesco 14 –£5.00

Australian Red, Tesco 14 –£3.50
The cheapest Aussie red in the world? Just possibly. Yet it is far from being the worst.

Australian Ruby Cabernet, Tesco 14 –£5.00

Australian Shiraz NV, Tesco 13 ~£5.00

Australian Shiraz/ Cabernet NV, Tesco 14 ~£5.00

Banrock Station Shiraz 1999 13 £5–7
Six quid seems a bit steep when the fruit is stretched to climb the taste buds and finish with any firmness

Banrock Station Shiraz/ Mataro 1999 15 ~£5.00
What a Lebanese food performer we have here! Even has a touch of coriander to it already. Juicy and ripe and richly textured.

Barramundi Shiraz/ Merlot NV 15.5 ~£5.00

Best's Great Western Dolcetto 1998 15.5 £5–7
Interesting curiosity of substance and wit. Takes a few seconds, from the juicy start, to get going, but it's soft, pliant and very pleasing. Wine Advisor stores

Blue Pyrenees Estate Red 1996 14 £10–13
The big, blustering, love-me-or leave me style of Aussie fruit. Wine Advisor stores

Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999 13.5 £5–7
Juicy! Needs spicy food.

Buckleys Grenache/ Shiraz/Mourvedre 1998 14 £7–10
Rather expensive for the style but it does possess some solid fruit and good tannins – and the finish is excellent
Top 200 stores.

Chapel Hill Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 14 £7–10
Touch expensive for the juicy style – the tannins are very subdued.

Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Tesco 16 £5–7
Very elegant and chic. Exceptional concentration of fruit, balance and polish. The tannins are refined yet crunchy.

Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/ Shiraz 1999 16.5 £5–7
Under six quid, one of Aussie's best big red wine bargains. Thrilling tannins and subtle spiciness.

Lindemans Bin 50 Shiraz 1998 14.5 £5–7
Simply delicious!

Lindemans Cawarra Shiraz/Cabernet 1999 14 ~£5.00
Juicy, very very juicy and curry-friendly.

McLaren Vale Grenache 1998, Tesco 13.5 £5–7
At most stores.

McLaren Vale Shiraz 1997, Tesco 14 £5–7
At most stores

Miranda 'Left Field' Tinta Cao 1998 13 ~£5.00
A most curiously resinous and bitter wine.

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5–7
Terrific! One of Australia's top-notch brands on the basis of its rich texture, good layers of fruit, warm, friendly tannins, and overall lushly impactful structure. An adults' Shiraz of great charm and persistence.

Penfold Koonunga Hill 16.5 £5–7

Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998
Superb quality and this is the best vintage yet of this well-established brand. Superb fruit, great texture.

Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1999 15 £5–7
So juicy it screams for chillies, cardamoms and stewed garlic.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1999 15.5 £5–7
Hugely friendly, it's archetypical Aussie Shiraz and really defines what this grape means at this price from this region.

Rosemount Shiraz 1998 15.5 £7–10
Hints of savouriness impinge on the great juicy depths.

Sunstone Fresh Spicy Red NV 12 £5.00

Temple Bruer Cornucopia Grenache 1997 14 £5–7

Tim Adams Shiraz 1997 14.5 £7–10

Woolpunda Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 £5.00
Hint of dryness to the juicy fruit gives it some seriousness

Woolpunda Shiraz 1998 16 £5.00
Soft, very cushy fruit of great style and mannered richness. It is wholly without pretension but it does have poise and plummy depths. Most stores.

THRESHER RED

Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998 15.5 £5–7
Juicy and ripe but maturing handsomely and reaching its peak of textured concentration and tannic tightness. After a while, this will loosen as it does with many Aussie like blends. So drink it soon. It won't keep.

Leasingham Domaine Cabernet/Malbec 1997 17 £7–10
Piles it on from every direction including the price tag. At £9.99 it must be compared to great Bordeaux and it simply knocks them into a cocked chapeau. It is beautifully rounded yet firmly dry, complex and very very bold to finish.

Lindemans Padthaway Shiraz 1997 15.5 £7–10
Possibly fades too quickly on the finish to rate higher but on the palate it has some classic Shiraz warmth with a very subtle eucalyptus edging Charming companion if you don't like gob-smacking endings.

Nanya Estate Malbec/Ruby Cabernet 1998 10 £5.00
This as a skimpy g-string but not so teasing

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5–7
Terrific! One of Australia's top-notch brands on the basis of its rich texture, good layers of fruit, warm, friendly tannins, and overall lushly impactful structure. An adults' Shiraz of great charm and persistence.

Oxford Landing Merlot 1999 14 £5–7
Juicy yet finishes dry. Only at Wine Rack and Bottoms Up.

St Hallett Barossa Shiraz 1997 13 £7–10

Tatachilla Grenache Shiraz 1998 16 £5–7
This estate has come on so much since it changed ownership. A decade ago I saw grapes destined for Tatachilla swollen with irrigated water but not the beauties which went into this bargain blend. The wine has style, bravura, loads of fruit but is never silly or too juicy. The tannins are temperate and tasty. With increasing Oz prices, this is a sane specimen in a mad world.

Tollana Red, S E Australia NV 13.5 £5.00

Yalumba Bush Vine Grenache 1997 14 £7–10
Very chewy and ripe with an overbaked edge to it. Can only be enjoyed with food.

UNWINS RED

Baileys 1904 Block Shiraz 1994 14 £10–13
Juicy and savoury and rather pricey now the fruit's turning so sweet. The tannins are the thing and they're becoming a touch wimpish now after six years.

Banrock Station Shiraz 1997 11.5 £5.00
Too old, too juicy, too cosmetic, too sticky, too everything.

Clancy's Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/ Cabernet Franc 1998 17 £7–10
Perfection at its peak – almost. Will it rate higher? How can it? It has wonderfully integrated generous tannins and plum/cherry/blackberry fruit.

Hill of Hope Shiraz 1997 14 £5–7
Not much life left in it – or rather the fruit has plenty of years but the tannins are at their last gasp.

Ironstone Shiraz Grenache 1998 16.5 £5–7
Deliciously concentrated and incisive. Rich, deep, ready, ripe (but not OTT), full of interesting fruits (including a hint of liquorice) and it finishes fully and profoundly.

J J McWilliam Merlot 1997 13 £5–7

Leasingham Clare Valley Grenache 1996 14.5 £7–10
Getting on a bit. The tannins are losing grip but it is still a contender for the Christmas bird.

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5–7
Terrific! One of Australia's top-notch brands on the basis of its rich texture, good layers of fruit, warm, friendly tannins, and overall lushly impactful structure. An adults' Shiraz of great charm and persistence.

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15 £5–7
Lovely spicy richness. A great branded red.

Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1999 15.5 £5–7
Hugely friendly, it's archetypical Aussie Shiraz and really defines what this grape means at this price from this region.

Vine Vale Grenache 1998 14.5 £5.00
An almost toffee-apple texture to it. Great chilled.

Wakefield Cabernet 16 £5–7

Sauvignon, Clare Valley 1998 — 13 — £5.00
Handsome chocolate fruit

Woodvale Shiraz 1998 — 13 — £5.00

VICTORIA WINE RED

Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998 — 15.5 — £5–7
Juicy and ripe but maturing handsomely and reaching its peak of textured concentration and tannic tightness. After a while, this will loosen as it does with many Aussie-like blends. So drink it soon. It won't keep.

Leasingham Domaine Cabernet/Malbec 1997 — 17 — £7–10
Piles it on from every direction including the price tag. At £9.99 it must be compared to great Bordeaux and it simply knocks them into a cocked chapeau. It is beautifully rounded yet firmly dry, complex and very very bold to finish.

Leasingham Grenache 1996 — 14.5 — £7–10
Getting on a bit. The tannins are losing grip but it is still a contender for the Christmas bird

Lindemans Padthaway Shiraz 1997 — 15.5 — £7–10
Possibly fades too quickly on the finish to rate higher but on the palate it has some classic Shiraz warmth with a very subtle eucalyptus edging Charming companion if you don't like gob-smacking endings.

Nanya Estate Malbec/Ruby Cabernet 1998 — 10 — ~£5.00
This as a skimpy g-string but not so teasing.

Tatachilla Grenache Shiraz 1998 — 16 — £5–7
This estate has come on so much since it changed ownership. A decade ago I saw grapes destined for Tatachilla swollen with irrigated water but not the beauties which went into this bargain blend. The wine has style, bravura, loads of fruit but is never silly or too juicy. The tannins are temperate and tasty. With increasing Oz prices, this is a sane specimen in a mad world.

Wynn's Coonawarra Shiraz 1996 — 16.5 — £5.7
Superbly classy and rich. Hints of mint cling to the deeply textured (denim and corduroy) fruit (plums, cherries and blackcurrants) and the sheer cheek of the fruit, its bounce yet gravitas, is terrific – the finish is syrup of figs. Martha's Vineyard only.

Yalumba Bush Vine Grenache 1997 — 14 — £7–10
Very chewy and ripe with an overbaked edge to it. Can only be enjoyed with food.

WAITROSE RED

Brown Brothers Barbera 1996 — 14* — £5.7
Juicy and ripe but great with food. Has some character on the finish.

Brown Brothers Nebbiolo 1996 — 13.5 — £7–10
Old, raisiny, very juicy. Not at all stores

Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999 — 13 — £5–7

Bushmans Crossing Cabernet/Merlot 1999 — 14 — £5.00

Ripe, raunchy, ready.

Chateau Reynella Basket-Pressed Shiraz 1997 17 £10–13
Lovely minty edge (subtle eucalyptus), beautifully smooth, wonderfully balanced and witty to finish.

Church Block Cabernet Shiraz Merlot, Wirra Wirra Vineyards 1998 17 £7–10
Wonderful brisk tannins coat the chocolate and cassis fruit. Marvellous stuff. Benchmark blend. Not at all stores.

Clancy's Red 1998 15 £7–10
Coffee edge to a chocolate-rich centre. Very palate-embracing and ripe.

Deakin Estate Merlot 1999 13.5 £5–7
Lovely plump richness, really big and mouthfilling, allied to pert tannins. A terrific Merlot for the money.

Eileen Hardy Shiraz 1996 14.5 £20+
Huge and motherly. Crushes the palate with fruit.

Fishermans Bend Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 12 –£5.00
Simple fruit juice with alcohol.

Garry Crittenden Sangiovese 1998 13.5 £10–13

Henschke Keyneton Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1996 12 £13–20
Poor value. Great juice at six quid. Only from Waitrose Direct.

Jindalee Shiraz 1999 14 –£5.00
Very ripe and forward.

Kingston Reserve Petit Verdot 1997 12 £13–20
Too pricey by half. Not at all stores.

Nanya Vineyard Malbec/Ruby Cabernet 1999 12 –£5.00
Too juicy and super-ripe.

Penfolds Organic Merlot/Shiraz/Cabernet 1998 13.5 £7–10
Immensely smooth (almost smug with it). Good rich texture and wrap-it up-slow finish.

Peter Lehmann The Barossa Shiraz 1998 17 £5–7
A broad-shouldered wine of some muscularity and yet fleet-of-foot deftness. Very textured, deep and flavoursome.

Rosemount GSM, McLaren Vale 1996 15 £13–20
Very juicy, raunchy and flinty with great warm tannins. Only from Waitrose Direct

Rosemount 'Hill of Gold' Shiraz, Mudgee 1998 17.5 £7–10
At last! A Rosemount red with world-class tannins. And it's under a tenner Beautifully well knit fruit here, totally captivating, and the texture is gripping, grand, and you feel greedy for more.

Settler's Station Tempranillo 1999 13 £5–7
Very very juicy.

Stonewell Shiraz, Barossa Valley 1994 14 £13–20
Very very expensive; very very elongated and palate-gripping.

Tatachilla Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot, McLaren Vale 1998 14.5 £7–10
Not as gripping as the '97 vintage. It's very ripe and jammy.

Tatachilla Foundation Shiraz 1997 14 £13–20

Ripe and juicy. Why do I imagine communion wine is like this?

Tatachilla Growers Grenache Mataro 1999 10 £5.00
So juicy and ripe I couldn't spit it out fast enough. Makes a good sauce for a game bird (and a game clot).

The Angelus Cabernet Sauvignon, Wirra Wirra 1997 14 £13–20
Very rich, bit cloying and unsubtle on the finish. Only from Waitrose Direct.

Wrattonbully Cabernet Sauvignon, Limestone Coast 1998 16 £5–7
Great fat fruit with incisive acids and soft, subtle tannins.

WINE CELLAR RED

Cleveland Brien Shiraz/Cabernet 1994 11 £7–10
Very stalky, grudging opening and the fruit is too sweet and tanninless.

Cleveland Macedon Pinot Noir 1996 10 £10–13
Fruit juice pretending to be Pinot. Actually, there is a faint echo of Pinot as the wine has long quit the throat and you feel a sense of wild raspberry but you more feel a sense of loss.

Jim Barrie McCrae Wood Shiraz 1996 14.5 £13–20
Very minty and ripe with huge waves of sweet, almondy fruit at its peak. A lot of money, though, for those waves. If only they'd not used egg whites to take out the tannins, there might have been a great wine here.

Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Bin 35 Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz/Ruby Cabernet 1998 14 £5–7
Soft and curry friendly.

Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1999 15 £5–7
Intense hedgerow sweetness. Very juicy.

Three Steps Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 13.5 £5–7
Odd, gets odder, finishes oddly. Now, I am an admirer of oddness and oddities. But here Pelion piles on Ossa and, at seven quid, I would prefer more elegance.

Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16 £13–20
One of Western Australia's smoothest customers. Lovely texture of such softness it's like velvet plus silk.

ASDA WHITE

Andrew Peace Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00

Cranswick Nine Pines Vineyard Marsanne 1998 16.5 £5.00
Astonishing value here and surprising level of mature layers of rich, ripe fruit. Textured and taut

Hardys Chardonnay Semillon 1999 16 £5–7
Throbs with richness! Just wallow in it.

Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay 1997 16.5 £5.00
Ooh..! It oozes with controlled richness yet calm, insouciant, relaxed fruitiness of inexpressibly delicious firmness and flavour.

Hardys Stamp Riesling Traminer 1997 15 £5.00

Houghton HWB 1998 16 £5–7
HWB stands for Houghton White Burgundy even though the grapes are not Burgundian. It is no compliment to compare it with inexpensive Burgundy, though. It's better.

Karalta Chardonnay 1998, Asda 15.5 £3.00
Exuberance and vivacity here. Brilliant toffeed edge to it (never OTT) and the ripeness makes it great with modern foods

Karalta Chardonnay/Semillon 1999, Asda 13.5 £3.50
Very soft and ripe.

Karalta Semillon 1999, Asda 14 £5.00
Thai food white.

Karalta White 1999, Asda 12 £3.50
A brilliant value party wine.

Maglieri Semillon 1999 16.5 £5–7
Very elegant and subtly ripe Brilliant wood and fruit integration and a clear, purposeful fruitiness

Mount Hurtle Chenin Blanc 1999 15.5 £5.00
Controlled lushness here. A big mouthful of warm fruit

Penfolds Rawson's Retreat Bin 21 Semillon Chardonnay Colombard 1997 15 £5.00

Peter Lehmann Eden Valley Riesling 1999 15.5 £5–7
A warm, richly textured wine which will get oilier and more stickily exciting as it ages.

Peter Lehmann The Barossa Semillon, 1998 16 £5–7
Superb texture here. Lordly richness.

Rosemount Estate Semillon/Chardonnay 1997 15 £5–7

Rymill Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Elegant and easy-going.

Temple Bruer Chenin Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Baked fruit salad with even a hint of cream. Wine from another planet. Delicious!

BOOTHS WHITE

Chateau Tahbilk Marsanne 1998 15.5 £5–7
Delicious texture, hint of sesame oil, touches of raspberry, lime and butter. All subtle but unmistakable.

Cranswick Botrytis Semillon 1996 (half-bottle) 15 £10–13
Terrific acids here, they give the honeyed fruit superb freshness. A great wine for fresh fruit.

CV Capel Vale Unwooded Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Better, in its steely yet rich fruit, than so many vaunted Chablis.

CV Capel Vale Verdelho 1998 16.5 £7–10
This is a lovely, softly textured, gently spicy artefact of immense charm.

d'Arenberg The Olive Grove Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Does it have a kind of green olive to the lime and melon fruit? Sheer fantasy I think.

d'Arenberg White Ochre 1999 13 £5–7
Bit simplistic for a fiver.

Deakin Estate Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00
One of Australia's bargain Chardies. Lovely hints of butter, lime, melon and strawberry.

Hardys Stamp Riesling Gewurztraminer 1999 15.5 £5.00
Super Chinese food wine. Has a rich spice undertone coupled with teasing acids.

Ironstone Semillon Chardonnay 1999 17 £5–7
Juicy rich pineapples and pears, plus lime and gooseberries – they're all there. Superb texture.

Marktree White SE Australia 1999 13.5 £5.00

Ninth Island Chardonnay 1999 13 £7–10
Very sullen on the finish and doesn't quite ignite under the tongue. Far too expensive

Oxford Landing Viognier 1998 16 £5–7
Compelling argument for the grape (Viognier) and the region (south Oz). Gorgeously subtle yet rich apricot fruit.

Penfolds Bin 21 Rawson's Retreat Semillon/Colombard/Chardonnay 1999 14 £5.00
A real mouthful of fruity grapes – in name and nature.

Penfolds Clare Valley Organic Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc 1998 15.5 £7–10
Very smooth, elegant and polished. However, do remember, as Philip Larkin pointed out, that only surface can be polished.

Riddoch Coonawarra Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
Very warmly textured and rich, hot and buttery on the tongue, and needs food to temper this enthusiasm for all-embracing flavoursomeness.

Shaw & Smith Sauvignon Blanc 1998 15 £7–10
Wonderful fish wine. Better than many a so-called great Sancerre.

BUDGENS WHITE

Hardys Stamp Grenache Shiraz Rosé 1999 13.5 £5.00
Sweet, and a touch cosmetic.

Oxford Landing Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5–7
Most accomplished warmth and elegance here.

Rawsons Retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999 15 £5.00
Delicious ripe fruit with gentle pineapple and lemon acids.

Rosemount Estate Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
One of the most stylish whites on Budgens' shelves

Rosemount Estate Semillon/Chardonnay 1997 15 £5–7

Rosemount GTR 2000 14 £5–7
Almost sweet, so rich is it. A white for oriental food.

White Pointer 2000 13 £5.00
Fresh and ripe. Like many an Aussie, indeed.

CWS WHITE

Australian Chardonnay 1999, Co-op 15.5 £5.00
Restrained richness and dry fruit – rather refined for the price.

Bethnay Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
The extra year of maturity has added layers of interest. It has a gorgeous aroma of cooking butter, the fruit is ripe and nutty, the finish brings in lime, butter and almonds. Nice lingering vegetality. Superstores only.

Hardys Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1998 15 £5–7
A solid blend of each grape's more distinguished virtues.

Jacaranda Hill Semillon 1999, Co-op 14 £5.00
Fresh, good layer of lemon tanginess. Great with fish.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
One of Oz's best under a fiver Chardonnays.

Lindemans Cawarra Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5.00
Nice turn of richness on the back of the palate and it goes from ripe melon to dusky pear and lemon.

Rosemount GTR 2000 14 £5–7
Almost sweet, so rich is it. A white for oriental food. Superstores only.

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Banrock Station Chardonnay 1999 14 £5.00
Hints of spiced pear to the rich, ripe ogen melon fruit. Great with scallops and seaweed.

Banrock Station Colombard Chardonnay 1999 15 £5.00
Much better vintage! The '99 is rich yet balanced, ripe and melony with good pineapple acidity.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Simply one of the tastiest, classiest examples of grape under-a-fiver in the world.

Pelican Bay Medium Dry White 14 £3.50

Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Semillon/ Chardonnay/Colombard 1999 15 £5.00
One of Australia's great blends, Sem and Chard, and this example, whilst hardly subtle, has some attractive elements

M&S WHITE

Fusion Riesling 1999 15 £5.00
Lovely collation of mineral dryness and lemony richness. A direct statement of Riesling's myriad virtues when young plus the potential to age with grace for decades.

HoneyTree Gewürztraminer Riesling 1999 12 £5–7
Too sweet for me.

HoneyTree Semillon Chardonnay 1999 13 £5–7

Hunter Valley Chardonnay Bin 109 1999 14.5 £5.00
Lean and dry, oddly untypical but

deliciously mineral-tinged and subtly citric.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Simply one of the tastiest, classiest examples of grape under-a fiver in the world.

Semillon Bin 381 1999 13 £5.00
Pear-drop edge, powdery edge to the fruit. Odd stuff altogether.

South East Australian Medium Dry 1999 13 £5.00
Very soft and yet curiously under-ripe.

South Eastern Australian Chardonnay 1999 15 £5.00
Elegant and rewarding. A very accomplished silkiness of texture and elegance of finish

South Eastern Australian Riesling 1999 12 £3.00
Bit muted and not varietally compelling.

Verdelho 1999 12 £5.00
Very mild and meek.

MAJESTIC WHITE

Bethany Riesling 1998 16.5 £5–7
Riesling from an alien life form. Compelling richness and crisp mineral tanginess combine to classic effect. It will age and become a twenty-point wine over the next five to seven years.

Bethany Semillon Riesling Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Brilliant blend of unlikely grapes (in marriage). Really fantastic fruit value.

Capel Vale Riesling 1999 15 £7–10
Needs two or three years to be at its best · will be seventeen points at least, I would hazard.

Capel Vale Verdelho 1999 16 £7–10
Wonderful concentrated vintage for this warmly coated, subtly spicy wine.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1998 16 £5.00
A hugely elegant vintage, this, for a classic Aussie Chardonnay. It has purpose, stealth, wit and warmth, and invites comparison with Chardonnays daring to cost a lot more.

Mamre Brook Chardonnay 1997 14 £5–7

Mirrabrook Chardonnay 1999 15 £3.50
Remarkable value. True, it's subtle and doesn't become very rich and the finish is demure but it has simple, delicious, well-wrought fruit of unpretentious demeanour.

Noble Road Verdelho 1998 14.5 £5–7
Sticky fruit and Chinese food friendly.

Oxford Landing Limited Release Viognier 1999 17 £5–7
One of the greatest Viogniers in the world in this vintage. The lingering apricots and gentle spice are remarkable

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £5.00
Keen and fresh with more than a hint of gooseberry.

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Crisp, clean, classy.

Pirramimma Chardonnay 1997 17 £5–7
Surprisingly complex and complete, it

develops delicious toasty nuances on the taste buds and encompasses many fruits I cannot put a name to. The balance, the texture, the excitement on the finish, though, are deliciously effable.

Pirramimma Late Harvest Riesling 1998 (half-bottle) 15 £5–7
Delicious ice cream wine. Can the Pirramimma range at Majestic do no wrong? Apparently not

Rosemount Estate Diamond Semillon 1997 16 £5–7
Unconscionably yummy and compellingly priced.

Rosemount GTR 1998 16 £5–7
What a whizzbang of a wine! Rich, spicy – but not aggressive – it offers the perfect credentials to go with oriental food.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
Almost a yoghurt ripeness here. Great with mood and/or food, it's an assertive wine of some style.

Wynns Coonawarra Riesling 1998 16 £5.00
Thrilling bargain and a great competition to Chardonnay. Lush yet has beautiful mineral and lime undertones

Yalumba Griffith-Barossa Botrytis Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 1997 (half-bottle) 16 £7–10
Lovely complexity and toffeed edge.

Yalumba Growers Chardonnay 1999 17 £5–7
Why bother with Montrachet at £75???

MORRISONS WHITE

Barramundi Semillon/ Chardonnay NV 16 £5.00
Lovely oily fruit, hint of bellpepper and mango, and the whole thing is altogether more serious than the playful label suggests. A great wine to quaff or to match with oriental, European or South American meat and fish dishes.

Brown Brothers Chenin Blanc 1998 14 £5.00
Great with Chinese food. Pure apricot and lemon fruit here.

Cranswick Kidman Way Chardonnay 1998 15.5 £5.00
Robust, spicy food – meet your match! No, it's not a sweet wine but it's so rich and thickly knit that it'll work like a butter sauce.

Deakin Estate Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00
One of Australia's bargain Chardies. Lovely hints of butter, lime, melon and strawberry.

Jindalee Chardonnay 1998 16 £5.00
Compelling richness and lemony elegant buttery fruit. Beautiful balance and precision.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
One of Oz's best under a fiver Chardonnays.

Nottage Hill Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00
Almost in the same league as Lindeman's. Perhaps its true score should be sixteen and three quarters.

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5-7
What a great brand! Stunning richness and balanced, classy finish. If only white Burgundians at three times the price could be this good.

Rosemount Estate Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5–7
Very elegant in spite of being richly cut and extravagant on the finish. A gorgeous wine.

Rosemount Estate GTR 1999 15 £5–7
Curiously lime-laden and demi-sec. Good for tandoori fish etc.

ODDBINS WHITE

Annie's Lane Riesling, Clare Valley 1999 15 £5–7
Lovely mineral hints as the lemon fruit surges down the throat.

Antipodean Unwooded Chardonnay 1999 15 £5–7
Knocks Chablis into a cocked chapeau. Wonderful pastry-rich fruit.

Bleasdale 'Sandhill Vineyard' Verdelho, Langhorne Creek 1999 13 £5–7
I'd lay it down for ten or twelve years and watch it put on five points more.

Brokenwood Cricket Pitch Sauvignon/ Semillon 1999 16 £7–10
Has a gently waxy finish to the richly chiming elements of fruit (melon) and acid (lemon) and this is its original touch

Campbells Liqueur Muscat, Rutherglen NV (half-bottle) 16.5 £5–7
A magnificent Christmas pudding wine of great depth. Has baked fruit and molasses, toffees and toasted nuts Incredibly good value for money. A real ambrosia of a wine.

Cranswick Estate Zirilli Vineyard Botrytis Semillon, Riverina 1996 16.5 £7–10
Medicinal, thick, rich, very sweet but with the textured fruit so well served by the brilliant tannins.

d'Arenberg The Olive Grove Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1998 16 £5–7
Does it have a kind of green olive to the lime and melon fruit? Sheer fantasy I think.

d'Arenberg White Ochre, McLaren Vale 1999 13 £5.00

Deakin Estate Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00
One of Australia's bargain chardies. Lovely hints of butter, lime, melon and strawberry.

E & C Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1999 13.5 £5–7

Hillstowe Sauvignon Blanc, Adelaide Hill 1999 13.5 £5–7
Sharpish.

Killawarra Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00
Bargain! Bounteous butter and rich acids. Terrific balance of style for the money

Knappstein Riesling, Clare Valley 1998 16 £5–7
Wonderful seafood compatibility here: almost has the mineral tang of ozone.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 —£5.00
One of Oz's best under-a-fiver Chardonnays.

Nepenthe Vineyards Lenswood Unwooded Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £7–10
How do they achieve such depth, texture and richness? A debating point. Not so the absence of wood, which is a great virtue.

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 —£5.00
Keen and fresh with more than a hint of gooseberry.

Penny's Hill Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1999 16 £7–10
Wonderful present for someone this Christmas: this wine and anything by Jim Crace. Perfect partners.

Peter Lehmann Semillon, Barossa 1999 16 £5–7
Very faintly exotic, lime-tinged richness to the fresh, lemon fruit. Delicious charms here.

Rothbury Estate Hunter Valley Verdelho 1998 16 £5–7
Class verdelho apricot/peach richness – which will develop well in bottle for a couple of years – gives this wine real charm. It's dry, tangy, ripe, and great with mild oriental food

Rufus Stone Sauvignon Blanc 1999 13.5 £5–7
Sharp

Seaview Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1998 14 —£5.00
Very fresh and tangy and great with food.

Tatachilla Sauvignon Semillon, McLaren Vale & Adelaide Hills 1998 15.5 £5–7

Wirra Wirra 'Sexton's Acre' Unwooded Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1999 15 £5–7
Still young – and maybe needs a year to concentrate itself – but delicious under-ripe melon and lime fruit here.

Wirra Wirra W2 Riesling 1998 14 —£5.00
Curious tang to it, but wonderful with oriental fish dishes.

Wolf Blass South Australia Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1999 16 £7–10
Nutty, rich, unrestrainedly youthful and zippy, and utterly tongue-tinglingly slurpable. It has, withal, curiously Burgundian undertones.

Wolf Blass South Australia Chardonnay 1999 16 £7–10
Has a restrained buttery bravado.

Yarra Valley Hills Kiah Yallambee Chardonnay 1998 12.5 £7–10

SAFEWAY WHITE

Annie's Lane Semillon, Clare Valley 1999 15.5 £5–7
Strides across the taste buds freshly, nuttily, fruitily and very satisfyingly. 77 stores

Australian Chardonnay/ Colombard 1999, Safeway 12 —£5.00

Australian Oaked Chardonnay 1999, Safeway 15 £3.00
Full of all-embracing, fruity charms. Quite delicious.

Basedow Semillon, Barossa Valley 1998 16.5 £5–7
A real mouthful of stylish, gung-ho fruit which, magically, never becomes boringly OTT.

Capel Vale Unwooded Chardonnay 1999 13 £7–10
Very elegant and easy going. Top 145 stores.

Capel Vale Verdelho 1999 16 £7–10
Wonderful concentrated vintage for this warmly coated, subtly spicy wine. Top 28 stores.

CV Chenin Blanc 2000 16 £5–7
Deliciously richly textured and gently smoky. Perfect for garlic scallops and clams.

Endeavour Barrel-fermented Chardonnay 1998 14.5 £7–10
Creamy ripeness here. Good with Chinese food. Selected stores.

Goundrey Reserve Selection Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £10–13
Expensive but very purposeful and complex. The wood is urgent but submits to the rich fruit. So the finish is striking. Selected stores.

Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay 1999 13 £5.00
Brighter and fresher than previous vintages. Superb purity of fruit!

Jindalee Chardonnay, Murray-Darling Region 1998 16 £5.00
Huge fun: spicy, cultured, beautifully plump and textured yet not over-ripe and the finish is lingering and evocative.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Simply one of the tastiest, classiest examples of grape under-a-fiver in the world.

Loxton Low Alcohol Chardonnay (1.2% vol) 11 £3.50

Mamre Brook Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Terrific pulsating melon richness. Yet it's balanced and sane.

Ninth Island Sauvignon Blanc, Tasmania 1999 14 £7–10
Expensive treat – though it does finish oddly

Penfolds Bin 21 Rawson's Retreat Semillon/Colombard/Chardonnay 1999 14 £5.00
A real mouthful of fruity grapes - in name and nature.

Penfolds Eden Valley Reserve Riesling 1999 13.5 £7–10
Bit numb, as yet. Cellar it for two years. It'll come round and score much higher. 28 stores.

Peter Lehmann 'The Barossa' Semillon 1999 16 £5–7
What a marvellous mouthful. Has a very subtle smoke and mineral edge with a faraway hint of pineapple. It'll age for years too. So put some down for 2008

Peter Lehmann Vine Vale Riesling, Barossa Valley 2000 13 £5.00

Oddly uncouth on the finish for Mr Lehmann.

Riddoch Coonawarra Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
Very warmly textured and rich, hot and buttery on the tongue, and needs food to temper this enthusiasm for all-embracing flavoursomeness.

Robertson Barrel Fermented Colombard 1999 13 –£5.00

Rosemount Show Reserve Chardonnay 1998 15 £7–10
Expensive creamy treat. At most stores.

Rothbury Estate Hunter Valley Verdelho 1999 16 £5–7
Class Verdelho apricot/peach richness – which will develop well in bottle for a couple of years – gives this wine real charm. It's dry, tangy, ripe, and great with mild oriental food

Taltarni Sauvignon Blanc, Victoria 1999 15.5 £5–7
A moody Sauvignon combining baked melon richness with fine mineral edged dryness

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Chardonnay 1999 16 –£5.00
Almost a yoghurt ripeness here. Great with mood and/or food, it's an assertive wine of some style.

Tatachilla Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Good woody creamy richness here, and it lingers lushly and delightfully. 77 stores.

Tatachilla Padthaway Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
The rampancy is controlled on the finish. Marvellous! Selected stores

Woolshed Chardonnay, Coonawarra 1998 16 £5–7
The tang of minerals is very subtle. Mostly it's the gorgeous texture which impacts greatest – and the gently lush fruit.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Australian Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's 16 –£5.00
Superb value for money. Great richness and acidic balance here. Remarkable value.

Brown Brothers Late Harvested Orange Muscat & Flora 1999 (half-bottle) 16.5 £5–7
It's the gorgeous honeyed hard-fruit acids which make it so exceptional as a pudding wine. Great with ice cream. Selected stores.

Hardys Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Lush yet light, potent yet delicate, focused yet multifaceted. A delightful conundrum. Selected stores.

Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon (3 litre box) 15.5 –£5.00
Delicious fruit, ripe yet not overflowing, dry yet quietly and unambitiously rich and relaxed. A first class welcome-home-from-the-coalface thirst quencher and mood enhancer. Not at all stores. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Hardys Stamp of Australia Riesling Gewurztraminer 1999 15.5 £5.00
Off dry style which admirably suits Peking duck.

Lindemans Limestone Coast Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5–7
Wonderful surge of lemon, lime, raspberries, spice and rich melon, plus a very subtle echo of greengage. A fantastic Chardonnay for the money. Selected stores.

Penfolds Botrytis Semillon 1998 (half-bottle) 15 £5–7
Gorgeous honeyed, almost sweet-marmalade richness. Great with blue cheese and foie gras. 50 stores.

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
One of the best vintages of this brand for some years. Has a gripping elegance to it of demure ripeness and class. Selected stores.

Penfolds Organic Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £7–10
A stylish construct of lemon/melon fruit and handsome texture. 70 stores.

Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999 15 £5.00
Delicious ripe fruit with gentle pine-apple and lemon acids. Not at all stores.

Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Semillon/ Chardonnay/ Colombard 1999 15 £5.00
One of Australia's great blends, sem and chard, and this example, whilst hardly subtle, has some attractive elements. Most stores

Petaluma Bridgewater Mill Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Turns and twists in its fruity layered richness and thus provides a helter-skelter of sensations for the palate – going from gooseberry tanginess to ripe melon moodiness. 75 stores

Petaluma Chardonnay 1998 13 £13–20
Not fifteen quid. No, never. 30 stores.

Peter Lehmann The Barossa Semillon 1999 16.5 £5–7
What a marvellous mouthful. Has a very subtle smoke and mineral edge with a faraway hint of pineapple. It'll age for years too. So put some down for 2008. Selected stores

Rosemount Estate Diamond Label Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Ripe and rich, but not over rampant. Intensely pleasing fruitiness on the finish. At most stores

Rosemount Estate Show Reserve Chardonnay 1999 14 £7–10
Lot of money but it tries to be a lot of wine. It's not OTT and the melonosity of the fruit is elegant, but a tenner is serious money. Selected stores

Stowells of Chelsea Australian Chardonnay NV (3 litre box) 15.5 £5.00
Excellent buttery richness allied to dry yet soft acids and the finish is lingering and never too lush. A balanced serious specimen. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
Almost a yoghurt ripeness here. Great

with mood and/or food, it's an assertive wine of some style.

Tyrrells Old Winery Chardonnay 1999 14 £5–7
Pleasant, cool, collected, not remotely Aussie in finish. It trembles rather than pulsates with fruit. 100 stores.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Australian Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 15.5 –£5.00

Australian Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 14.5 –£5.00
A richly engaging pasta plonk, especially those with tomato sauces.

Banrock Station Chardonnay 1999 14 –£5.00
Hints of spiced pear to the rich, ripe ogen melon fruit. Great with scallops and seaweed

Banrock Station Colombard Chardonnay 1999 15 –£5.00
Much better vintage! The '99 is rich yet balanced, ripe and melony with good pineapple acidity.

Hardys Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1998 15 £5–7
A solid blend of each grape's more distinguished virtues. Limited distribution

Hardys Padthaway Chardonnay 1996 16 £7.10
Do you like Meursault? You'll like this, then. This kind of woody, hay rich, vegetal fruitiness is a miracle under eight quid. Top 200 stores.

Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon 1999 15 –£5.00
Very gentle toffeed edge, almost like butterscotch. But the lemon acids compete

Hardys Stamp of Australia Riesling Gewürztraminer 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Off-dry style which admirably suits Peking duck.

Hardys Stamp Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999 15 –£5.00
The usual buttery richness which stays the sane side of OTT. Delicious with food

Jacobs Creek Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999 15.5 –£5.00
One of the best of this blend of grapes, under a fiver. Purposeful and nicely plump on the finish.

Jindalee Chardonnay 1999 16 –£5.00
Lovely gripping texture and warmly woven melon, cherry, peach and pineapple fruit. Touch of exotic spice on the finish, too.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 –£5.00
Simply one of the tastiest, classiest examples of grape under-a-fiver in the world

Lindemans Padthaway Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £7.10
When they write the book on great Oz Chardonnays under a tenner, this specimen will be near the top.

Loxton Lunchtime Light Chardonnay (4% vol) 12 –£3.50

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Crisp, clean, classy.

Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Semillon/ Chardonnay/Colombard 1999 15 ~~£9.00~~

One of Australia's great blends, Sem and Chard, and this example, whilst hardly subtle, has some attractive elements.

SPAR WHITE

Australian Semillon Chardonnay 1999, Spar 16 ~~£5.00~~

Terrific oily fruit: bold, thick, rich and purposeful. A positive pleasure-providing mouthful.

Burraburra Hill Chardonnay 1999, Spar 15.5 ~~£5.00~~

Big, fat and wide. Like a juicy slab of melted butter. Great to spread on food, like rich fish dishes.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 ~~£5.00~~

Simply one of the tastiest, classiest examples of grape under-a-fiver in the world.

TESCO WHITE

Australian Chardonnay, Tesco 16 ~~£3.50~~

Terrific value here, fully represented by the exuberance of the blue rollers on the label as much as by the tidal wave of flavour in the fruit. Lush, loving, warm, delicious.

Banrock Station Chardonnay 1999 14 ~~£5.00~~

Better than the '98, that's for sure. The toffeed richness is more controlled thanks to some acidic presence.

Barramundi Semillon/ Chardonnay NV 16 ~~£5.00~~

Lovely oily fruit, hint of bellpepper and mango, and the whole thing is altogether more serious than the playful label suggests. A great wine to quaff or to match with oriental, European or South American meat and fish dishes At most stores.

Blue Pyrenees Estate Chardonnay 1997 16.5 ~~£10–13~~

A big sticky wine where sticky butterscotch fruit offers a fruit custard finish of striking texture and tenacity. Not subtle but not OTT either. It's deeply meaningful and looking for a relationship. Wine Advisor stores only.

Blues Point Semillon/ Chardonnay 1998 12.5 ~~£5–7~~

Brown Brothers Dry Muscat 1999 15 ~~£5–7~~

Individual in character, remarkable in its make-up: lemon sherbety, rich, dry, hint of ripe Muscat grapes on the finish slightly exotic and spicy. A delicious aperitif.

Chapel Hill Unwooded Chardonnay 1998 15.5 ~~£5–7~~

Delicious buttery richness, plus a subtle pastry-like edge to the fruit. An immense slurper.

Clare Valley Riesling 1999, Tesco 15.5 ~~£5.00~~

Superb mineralised fruit, slightly nervous edge (typical of the grape in its new world manifestation) but wholly convincing. It will age well, developing a more intense expression, over the next five to ten years, but you may feel disinclined to wait.

Geoff Merrill Chardonnay Reserve 1995 17 ~~£7–10~~

Delicious Le Montrachet style Aussie with all the thrilling vegetality that implies but no sullenness on the finish. A brilliant wine of great class and world class winemaking. Top 80 stores.

Hardys Grenache/Shiraz Rosé 1999 14 ~£5.00

Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon 1999 15 ~£5.00
Very gentle toffeed edge, almost like butterscotch. But the lemon acids compete.

Hunter Valley Semillon 1999, Tesco 13.5 £5–7
Expensive, at six quid, when it's a £3.99 fruit style.

Jacobs Creek Dry Riesling 2000 14 ~£5.00
It is very dry, too dry for oriental food, so it's a riesling for fish cakes, etc.

Langhorne Creek Verdelho 1998, Tesco 15.5 ~£5.00

Limited Release Barramundi Marsanne 1998 16.5 £5–7
I love the big oily richness of this thickly textured, tautly designed wine. The fruit is dry peach with a hint of waxy pineapple

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 16.5 ~£5.00
Simply one of the tastiest, classiest examples of grape under-a-fiver in the world

Lindemans Cawarra Chardonnay 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Nice turn of richness on the back of the palate and it goes from ripe melon to dusky pear and lemon. Not at all stores.

McLaren Vale Chardonnay 1999, Tesco 15 £5–7
Very rich and full marvellous for food. Has melons, pineapples, lemons

Miranda White Pointer 1999 15 ~£5.00
Crisp, dry, flavoursome.

Mount Pleasant Elizabeth Semillon 1994 15.5 £7–10

Ninth Island Chardonnay 1998 14 £7–10
Ripe, nervous, expensive, drinkable, fish friendly.

Normans Unwooded Chardonnay 1999 16.5 ~£5.00
Utterly gorgeous buttery, slightly baked richness and depth of fruit here. Awesomely Aussie – in the most discreet way.

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 ~£5.00
Keen and fresh with more than a hint of gooseberry.

Pendulum Chardonnay 1999 15 ~£5.00
Made in stainless steel tanks (with chips of oak added) and bottled in what looks like steel (no added wood noticeable). The fruit is forward, creamy, ripe and very ready. Great with Thai food. Most stores.

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Oh, I didn't like it when it went over a fiver but there's no gainsaying the general excellence of the wine's firm, fruit flow. It has two levels of flavour, and a good texture.

Pewsey Vale Eden Valley Riesling 1999 15.5 £5–7
Delicious Aussie-style of the ancient teutonic grape. Still minerally and citric but has terrific warmth yet freshness to it.

Provenance Chardonnay 1997 13.5 £10–13
Very rich and cloying and it fails to finish with a balanced sense of poise or passion. Wine Advisor stores only.

Rosemount Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
One of the most stylish Australian whites in the country.

Rosemount Sauvignon Blanc 2000 15 £5–7
Deliciously ripe yet fresh with that tart, tight, terrific Sauvignon tang of minerals and gooseberries. Echo of lime in there, too

Rosemount Semillon/Sauvignon 1999 14 £5–7
A good fish wine with its fresh, tangy fruit.

Smithbrook Chardonnay 1998 15 £7–10
Very soft and almost succulent, but saved from this puppyish fate by the gentle yet firm acids. Selected stores.

Smooth Voluptuous White NV, Tesco 15 –£5.00

St Hallett Poachers Blend 1998 16 –£5.00
A thundering bargain here: dry (yet rich), full (yet subtle and with some complexity), cheap (yet expensive in feel), classy (yet with a down-to-earth unpretentious personality).

Tasmanian Chardonnay 1999, Tesco 13 £5–7
Curious schizophrenic fruit – can't make up its mind whether it's an overripe melon or an under-ripe lemon.

Tim Adams Riesling 1998 16 £7–10
Very classy and very advanced acidically (limey and mineral-tinged) and it has years of development ahead of it. But it is striking now – and superb with smoked fish. 200 stores.

Woolpunda Blue Rock Chardonnay 1998 15.5 –£5.00
Brilliant starter off the blocks, aroma and rich fruit hit the front of the palate biggishly, then a demure side is apparent. Not at all stores

Yendah Vale Chardonnay/Merlot Rosé 1999 12 –£5.00
Curious fruit-juicy richness.

THRESHER WHITE

David Traeger Verdelho, Victoria 1998 16 £7–10
A real spicy treat! Lovely pineapple/citrus edging to ripe peach and pear fruit. Great quaffing and oriental food wine.

Hardys Nottage Hill Riesling 1998 15.5 –£5.00
Lovely mineral acids and subtle hard fruit flavours. Will age well (possibly spectacularly – seven to eight years) but it shows finesse and style now. Only at Wine Rack.

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £5.00
Keen and fresh with more than a hint of gooseberry.

Penfolds Rawsons 15 –£5.00

Retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999
Delicious ripe fruit with gentle pineapple and lemon acids.

Pewsey Vale Riesling 1997 16 £5–7
The satin texture is one thing, the nigh-classic aroma is another (something no European Riesling acquires so young), and the finish is yet another. Even so, you can cellar it for five more years and who knows if perfection won't emerge?

Riddoch Coonawarra Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
Very warmly textured and rich, hot and buttery on the tongue, and needs food to temper this enthusiasm for all-embracing flavoursomeness.

Samuels Bay Riesling, Eden Valley 1997 16 £5–7
Very rich, thick fruit with a touch of exoticism which will be brilliant with oriental food

Tollana Unoaked Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00

UNWINS WHITE

Capel Vale C V Unwooded Chardonnay 1999 15 £7–10
Very elegant and easy going

David Wynn Chardonnay, S. Australia 1998 16 £5–7
Terrific acids and warm fruit. Quite delicious.

Grant Burge Late Harvest Muscat 1997 16 £5.00
Menthol-laden, pineappley, very rich and half sweet. A wonderfully different aperitif and Chinese food wine, with sweet plum sauce.

Grant Burge Old Vine Semillon, Barossa Valley 1997 14 £7–10

Howcroft Bin 6000 Verdelho 1998 15.5 £5–7
Gorgeous lushness without being OTT. Great with Thai food.

Ironstone Semillon Chardonnay 1999 17 £5–7
Superb minerals here. Quite remarkably stylish and classy for the money.

Lindemans Botrytis Riesling 1997 (half-bottle) 16 £5–7
Lovely sweet honeyed fruit with an undertone of ripe pineapple and juicy raisins. A superb pudding wine in the perfect half-bottle size for the lonely hedonist sitting in front of blue cheese and a big bunch of grapes

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £5.00
Keen and fresh with more than a hint of gooseberry.

Oxford Landing Viognier 1998 16 £5–7
Compelling argument for the grape (Viognier) and the region (south Oz). Gorgeously subtle yet rich apricot fruit.

Peter Lehmann The Barossa Semillon 1998 16.5 £5–7
Superbly elegant richness and ripeness of expression without heaviness or blatant fruitiness. Fine, elegant, individual.

Peter Lehmannn Vine Vale Chenin Blanc 1998 15.5 £5.00

Very rich and vivacious. Marvellous oriental food wine.

Rosemount Estate Diamond Label Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Ripe and rich, but not over-rampant. Intensely pleasing fruitiness on the finish

Stanton & Killeen Rutherglen Muscat NV (half-bottle) 16 £5–7
Wonderful with ice cream.

Stockman's Bridge White NV 14 ~£5.00
Crisp pineapple and melon fruit.

Tim Gramp Watervale Riesling 1997 16.5 £7–10
Riesling as striking as can be with its chewy minerals and rich, textured fruit.

Tyrrells Long Flat Chardonnay 1999 14 £5–7
Hint of sweetness on the finish.

Wakefield Chardonnay, Clare Valley 1997 13 £5–7

Wakefield White Clare Crouchen/Chardonnay 1997 14 £5–7
Ripe, clashing elements

Woodvale Chardonnay 1999 15 ~£5.00
Bargain richness here. Very calm and cool

Woodvale Semillon/Chardonnay 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Utterly delicious. Superb texture and plump-edged fruit with lovely incisive acids. A vibrant wine of great style.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

David Traeger Verdelho, Victoria 1998 16 £7–10
A real spicy treat! Lovely pineapple/citrus edging to ripe peach and pear fruit. Great quaffing and oriental food wine. Selected stores.

Hardys Nottage Hill Riesling 1998 15.5 ~£5.00
Lovely mineral acids and subtle hard fruit flavours. Will age well (possibly spectacularly – seven to eight years) but it shows finesse and style now.

Lindemans Botrytis Riesling 1996 (half-bottle) 17 £5–7
Magnificently alluring bouquet suggestive of spiced soft fruit. Thereafter it's like an eccentric Trockenbeerenauslese of unusual ripeness and limpidity.

Mitchelton Chardonnay 1996 15 £7–10

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 ~£5.00
Keen and fresh with more than a hint of gooseberry.

Pewsey Vale Riesling 1997 16 £5–7
The satin texture is one thing, the nigh-classic aroma is another (something no European riesling acquires so young), and the finish is yet another. Even so, you can cellar it for five more years and who knows if perfection won't emerge?

Tollana Unoaked Chardonnay 1999 15.5 ~£5.00

Wolf Blass South Australia Barrel 16 £7–10

Fermented Chardonnay 1999
Nutty, rich, unrestrainedly youthful and zippy, and utterly tongue-tinglingly slurpable. It has, withal, curiously Burgundian undertones.

Wolf Blass South Australia Chardonnay 1999 16 £7–10
Has a restrained buttery bravado.

WAITROSE WHITE

Broken Bridge Chardonnay/Colombard 1999 13 £3.50
Tries hard but how can you produce an interesting Aussie white under three quid? T'aint possible, mate.

Broken Bridge Colombard Chardonnay 1999 14.5 £3.50
Brilliant value fish 'n'-chip party wine

Brown Brothers Late Harvested Orange Muscat & Flora 1999 (half-bottle) 16.5 £5–7
It's the gorgeous honeyed hard fruit acids which make it so exceptional as a pudding wine. Great with ice cream.

Bushmans Crossing Semillon/Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5.00
Oddly uncertain on the finish.

Chateau Tahbilk Unwooded Marsanne, Victoria 1998 16 £5–7
Love its unashamed purity of full fruit freshness. Grapes all the way through – no other influences are apparent. Lovely richness and texture and a lilting finish.

Hardys Stamp of Australia Grenache Shiraz Rosé 1999 13.5 £5.00

Houghton Classic Dry White 1998 13.5 £5–7

Leasingham Domaine Chardonnay 1997 16 £5–7
Gorgeous gooseberry/melon/lemon fruit.

Nepenthe Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc 1999 14 £7–10
Lot of money. Limited branches.

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 2000 14 £5.00
Typical Sauvignon dryness and fish friendliness

Pendulum Chardonnay 1999 15 £5.00
Made in stainless steel tanks (with chips of oak added) and bottled in what looks like steel (no added wood noticeable). The fruit is forward, creamy, ripe and very ready. Great with Thai food.

Penfolds Bin 95a Chardonnay 13.5 £13–20

Penfolds Clare Valley Organic Chardonnay/ Sauvignon Blanc, 1998 (organic) 15.5 £7–10
Appealing blend of rich melonic ripeness and cool citric crispness.

Penfolds Old Vine Semillon, Barossa 1998 16 £5–7
I love the strident buttery richness as it impacts on the buds and then the stream of lush acidity which strikes the throat.

Penfolds Rawson's retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999 15 ~£5.00
Tangy and rich, will age interestingly for a couple of years (screw-capped, it'd be interesting for twenty years).

Petaluma Piccadilly Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £13–20
Superb balance of elements with this wine: one of Oz's classiest Chardonnays.

Tatachilla Sauvignon/Semillon, McLaren Vale 1999 15 ~£5.00
Very cool and collected and not your usual buttery Aussie display.

Voyager Estate Chardonnay 1997 17.5 £10–13
Remarkably chewy, ripe, creamy, vegetal, outstandingly elegant and hugely classy.

Wirra Wirra Oaked Chardonnay 1998 17 £7–10
Superb class here really stretches what Chardonnay can do without coming apart. Lovely ripeness yet delicacy and huge immediacy of impact. Drink it young. It's wonderful young. Limited branches.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Capel Vale Verdelho 1999 16 £7–10
Wonderful concentrated vintage for this warmly coated, subtly spicy wine.

Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon 1999 15 ~£5.00
Very gentle toffeed edge, almost like butterscotch. But the lemon acids compete.

Heggies Chardonnay 1997 16 £7–10
Richness and depth and a lovely creamy, woody feel. Subtle, single-minded, substantial a ravishing wine.

Three Steps Chardonnay 1998 13.5 £5–7
A most unusually thickly-fruited Chardonnay (I nearly wrote cardie) and the fruit is bruised and ripe. Needs food, though the lack of acidity is a problem . . . What food?

Wolf Blass President's Selection McLaren Vale Chardonnay 1997 17 £7–10
Big, smoky fruit of unabashed lushness and woody richness. Marvellous with rich fish dishes, salamis, poultry, and torrid conversation.

AUSTRIA

A boutique wine producer with an incorrigibly quaint streak up its backside. Produces some amusingly voluptuous sweet whites and one eminently quaffable red, Blauer Zweigelt, which has more guts and personality than the Beaujolais it resembles

TESCO RED

Blauer Zweigelt Lenz Moser 1997 14.5 ~£5.00

Like a Beaujolais, only rawer and more naturally fruity (i.e. no sugar added to boost the alcohol). It's juicy and cherry and plum laden Very refreshing. Very charming.

Disastrous name, gawky packaging, uncertain fruit – its rating is chancy.

TESCO WHITE

Lenz Moser's Prestige Beerenauslese 1995 (half-bottle) 15 £5–7

ODDBINS WHITE

Polz Grassnitzberg Grauburgunder 1998 11 £7–10

Immensely unexciting for eight pounds.

WAITROSE WHITE

Bouvier Beerenauslese Munzenrieder 1996 12 £5–7

The butterscotch sweetness fades into jejune acidity on the finish which mars the effect.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Cat's Leap Grüner Veltliner 1999 12 ~£5.00

BULGARIA

The land which, as Thrace, supplied the Greek troops of the Trojan War with booze is emerging slowly from the dead hand and crippling mind-set of Communism. New ventures, new initiatives with wine co-operatives (with genuine worker and grape grower shareholdings), and new investment in state-of-the-art equipment, all promise to create a new dynamic in this favourite source of some of the UK's most remarkable red wine bargains. I expect to see more and more branded wine ranges coming out of Bulgaria, and many of them will be outstanding

ASDA RED

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon, Svichtov 1995, Asda 14 £5.00

Simply a masterpiece of deft gluggability. Yet, it has dry tannins to go with food.

Bulgarian Country Red, Asda 14 £3.50

Bulgarian Oak Aged Cabernet Sauvignon, Svichtov 1993, Asda 15 £5.00

Sliven Merlot/Pinot Noir NV 13.5 £3.50

BOOTHS RED

Boyar Cabernet Merlot 1998 12.5 £3.50
Very juicy and dries out, and dies out, on the finish

KWIK SAVE RED

Boyar Merlot 1999 15 £3.50
Immensely charming. Great tannins and warmth of fruit.

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999. Somerfield 13.5 £3.50
Juicy yet dry.

Bulgarian Country Red NV, Somerfield 14 £3.50
Dry, earthy cherries. Great chilled.

CWS RED

Plovdiv Cabernet Sauvignon Rubin 1996 13.5 £3.50

Pomorie Country Cabernet/Merlot 1998 13.5 £3.50

MORRISONS RED

Boyar Bulgarian Gamza 1998 14 £3.50

Boyar Iambol Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14.5 £3.50
Bargain basement dry blackcurrants

Boyar Premium Oak Merlot 1997 13.5 £5.00

Danube Red 1999 13.5 £3.50
Dry but rich and jammily textured

SAFEWAY RED

Azbuka Merlot 1996 15 £5–7
Savoury, intensely so, and it packs a wallop on the finish. Selected stores.

Bulgarian Country Red, Merlot/Gamza 1999, Safeway 15.5 £3.50
Oh! What joyous fruit! It veritably melts in the mouth.

Nazdrave Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15.5 £5.00
Terrific! The new wave of Bulgars and they're right up my street. This one is dry yet blackcurranty, deftly tannic without being Bordeaux about it and deliciously well-textured.

Sapphire Cove NV 14.5 £3.50
Marvellous dry richness and textured fruit

Suhindol Merlot Reserve 1996 14 £5.00
Juicy, yes, touch obvious, yes, unsubtle, yes – but . . . great with rich food.

Young Vatted Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway 14 £3.50
Very juicy and jammy. Delicious with Indian food.

Young Vatted Merlot 1999, Safeway 14.5 £3.50
Merlot as all-embracingly fruity.

SAINSBURY'S RED

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 15.5 £3.50
Terrific richness and typical cabernet bell pepper dryness. An excellent study in bargain fruit sufficiently meaty and well formed to please any wine drinker (at fifty pence a glass). The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle

Bulgarian Country Dry Red, Russe, Sainsbury's (1.5 litre) 14.5 £3.50
The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Bulgarian Merlot NV, Sainsbury's 15.5 £3.50
World's dullest wine label. Hiding behind which is some delicious purple fruit of style and wit. Most stores.

Domaine Boyar Premium Oak Barrel Aged Merlot 1997 14 £5.00

Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 14.5 £5.00
Cabernet as jammy yet dry, rich yet fresh. Great glugging for stand-up drinks parties. Most stores.

Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Merlot 1997 15 £5.00
It's more Aussie in its soft ripeness than many an Aussie. Remarkable juice. Selected stores.

SOMERFIELD RED

Boyar Merlot 1999 15 £3.50
Immensely charming. Great tannins and warmth of fruit.

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Somerfield 13.5 ~£3.50
Juicy yet dry.

Bulgarian Country Red NV, Somerfield 14 ~£3.50
Dry, earthy cherries. Great chilled.

SPAR RED

Bulgarian Country Wine Cabernet Sauvignon & Merlot NV, Spar 13 ~£3.50
Good pasta plonk. Has some assertive tannins.

TESCO RED

Azbuka Cabernet Sauvignon 1994 14 £5–7
Juicy, teeth-wrenching style. Jammy and super-ripe. 100 selected stores.

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1995, Tesco 14 ~£5.00
Again, I'm not keen on the aroma but I do like the vivid tannins and fruit.

Reka Valley Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Tesco 14.5 ~£3.50
A really solid Cabernet with firm, rich tannins. Absurdly impressive for the risible price-tag.

THRESHER RED

Copper Crossing Red NV 14 ~£3.50

Domaine Boyar Premium Oaked Cabernet Shumen 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

Domaine Boyar Premium 14 ~£5.00

Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1996
Sweet with a bitter undertone.

Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Merlot 1996 14.5 ~£5.00
Very ripe, rich and full. Not typically merlot. Very quaffable and polished.

UNWINS RED

Country Wine Merlot/ Pinot Noir NV, Sliven 14 ~£3.50

VICTORIA WINE RED

Domaine Boyar Premium Oaked Cabernet Shumen 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 14 ~£5.00
Sweet with a bitter undertone.

Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Merlot 1996 14.5 ~£5.00
Very ripe, rich and full. Not typically merlot. Very quaffable and polished.

WAITROSE RED

Domaine Boyar Merlot/ Gamza, Iambol 1999 15 ~£3.50
Brisk, touch brusque, brilliant value.

WINE CELLAR RED

Domaine Boyar Cabernet Sauvignon NV 15.5 ~£3.50
Hints of marzipan to the deliciously ripe fruit (plums and blackcurrants) and the tannins are impressively congealed.

Domaine Boyar Cabernet/Merlot 1998 14 £3.50
Bargain quaffing. Has a dry underbelly but it's mostly hedgerows and happy-juice.

Domaine Boyar Reserve Merlot/Gamza 1996 14.5 £5.00
Lovely texture and very lingering tannins which hold the fruit on the taste buds for some time after the liquid has quit the throat

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Bulgarian Country White 1999, Somerfield 14.5 £3.50
An excellent blend of crispness and soft melonicity.

MORRISONS WHITE

Boyar Pomorie Chardonnay 1998 10 £3.50
Pretty ugly (as the French say).

SAFEWAY WHITE

Bulgarian Chardonnay, Rousse 1999, Safeway 13 £3.50

Bulgarian Country Wine, Welschrizling/Rikat 1999, Safeway 12.5 £3.50

Bulgarian Oaked Chardonnay Reserve 1998, Safeway 10 £5.00
Do you like chewing planks?

Preslav, Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1997 16 £5.00
Terrific spicy melon and lemon fruit. Brilliantly textured and plump without being obese.

Valley of the Roses Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 1999 13 £3.50

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Bulgarian Chardonnay 1998, Somerfield 14 £3.50

Bulgarian Country White 1999, Somerfield 14.5 £3.50
An excellent blend of crispness and soft melonicity.

SPAR WHITE

Bulgarian Country White NV, Spar 13 £3.50
Very cosmetic finish, powdery and a little uncongenial.

THRESHER WHITE

Boyar Muskat & Ugni Blanc NV 11 £3.50

Copper Crossing Dry White NV 10 £3.50
Rather like a cordial. Thresher Wine Stores only.

Copper Crossing Medium White NV 12 £3.50
A medium rating, then. And no dry remarks. Thresher Wine Stores only.

UNWINS WHITE

Country Wine Muskat & Ugni Blanc, Shumen NV 14 £3.50

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Boyar Muskat & Ugni Blanc NV — 11 — £3.50

Copper Crossing Dry White NV — 10 — £3.50
Rather like a cordial.

Copper Crossing Medium White NV — 12 — £3.50
A medium rating, then. And no dry remarks.

Domaine de Boyar Targovischte Chardonnay 1997 — 12 — £3.50

CHILE

This paradise for grapes continues to keep the baton in its grasp and does not seem inclined to pass it on to anyone. I don't think it will relinquish its grip. The wines, for the greater part, are simply sublime, great value, complex without contortion, elegant without being prissy. That said, however, I am tasting an increasing number of routinely made red and white Chilean wines which smack horribly of mass production and overyields of grapes. These are invariably found at unfashionable retailers rushing, witlessly, to buy anything with Chile on the label.

ASDA RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 17 —£5.00
Utter magic. Dark, rich, firm yet supple, wonderfully seriously fruity (leather, spice, blackcurrants) and hugely lingering. Brilliant for the money, quite brilliant. Selected stores.

Casas del Bosque Merlot 1999 14 £5–7
Juicy ripeness.

Castillo de Molina Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15.5 £5–7
Immensely friendly and soft. It really charms the taste buds, almost sweet-talks them.

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Asda 16.5 £5.00
So drinkable and well knit it performs like a wine costing a good deal more. Great texture, richness and warm, aromatic fruit

Chilean Red 1997, Asda 14.5 —£3.50

Cono Sur Merlot 1999 16 —£5.00
It's the rich, soft texture which carries the points. The fruit is in decent plummy shape, too, but the sheer velvet of the delivery is superlative.

Cono Sur Merlot Reserve 1999 16.5 £5–7
Not chilly or austere like cabernet from Bordeaux but warm, friendly, full, and huge fun. Wonderful quaffing here

Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1999 16 —£5.00
Fantastic Pinot profile: rich, elegant, thorny, classic . . . and with typical Chilean extra richness and texture.

BOOTHS RED

Carmen Grande Vidure Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £7–10
Rousingly perfumed, nobly leathery and cassis fruit, with piles of fruity texture. A lovely wine.

Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1998 16.5 —£5.00

Very rich and ripe, not classic, but feral raspberries and truffles are detectable and the texture is super-deep. But it elevates itself over ten thousand red Burgundies asking five times more.

Vistasur Cabernet Malbec 1998 14 £5.00
Very jammy and taste-bud-spreadable. Needs robust, spicy food.

BUDGENS RED

Antu Mapu Merlot 1998 15 £5.00
Stalky, ripe, touch of elegance on the finish but it's mostly controlled fruit of some style.

Antu Mapu Merlot Reserva 1998 14 £5–7

Millaman Cabernet Malbec 1998 13 £5–7
Touch expensive for the style.

Millaman Merlot 1999 14 £5–7
Ripe but friendly.

Stowells of Chelsea Cabernet Merlot NV 14.5 £5.00
Very thick and creamily clotted with prunes and blackberries. Great for robust meat dishes. South America chilled chicken would be perfect.

Terra Andina Cabernet Merlot 1999 14 £5.00
Hint of pepper, touch of the sun, suggestion of leather and plums.

Terra Andina Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5.00
Very big and fruity. Good spicy sausage wine.

Vina Gracia Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 £5.00
Soupy and warm, thickly textured, full of richness.

CWS RED

Antares Merlot 1998 16 £5.00
Touch of spice to the leather but it's the grip of the wine, the sheer effrontery of the texture, which wins it. Not at Convenience Stores

Casa Lapostolle Merlot Cuvee Alexandre 1997 17.5 £10–13
One of the world's most delicious Merlots, it is also stonking good value and unusually health-giving. A remarkable performer (for heart and soul).

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon, Co-op 15 £5.00
So unusually well polished and proper, it's like a schoolchild with a perfectly knotted tie. Yet it reveals, at the death, some rich character.

Chilean Fair Trade Carmenere 2000, Co-op 15.5 £5.00
Touch of spicy yoghurt to the fruit as it descends is only the last act of a drama which is fruity, entertainingly layered and ripe, and very involving.

La Palmeria Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5.00
More like a Merlot in its leathery odiferousness and softness. Utterly delicious, civilised tannins.

La Palmeria Merlot Gran Reserva 1998 17 £7–10
Such lush class! Beautiful texture, like crumpled velvet, lovely leather aroma and rich fruit

Las Lomas Cot Rouge Reserva 1998 15 £5–7

Superbly juicy and rich. Why it's called Cot rather than Malbec (same grape) I know not unless it's supposed to resemble Cahors (which it doesn't). Superstores only.

Las Lomas Organic Chilean Red, Vinas Viejas 1998 16 £5–7
Spicy, nutty, tannic, ripe, individual, generous, warmly textured: an audacious performance. Superstores only.

Long Slim Cabernet Merlot 1999 16 £5.00
Bargain claret style undertone but it's the Chilean warmth and wit (in the merlot component especially) which hogs the limelight as the delicious fruit quits the throat.

Old Vines Carignan 1999, Co-op 14 £5.00
Hugely gluggable (and chillable for fish dishes). Not at Co-op Convenience stores.

Terramater Malbec 1999 15.5 £5.00
Hint of spice to the cherries and blackberries, touch of herb, suggestion of earth – plus tannins. Superstores only.

Vina Gracia Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1999 15.5 £5–7
Bitter chocolate and dark cherries is the theme played on deep pile carpet fruit of substance and longevity. Superstores only.

Vina Gracia Carmenere Reserve Especial 1999 16 £5.00
Vibrant, sexy, textured, beautifully harmonised elements (fruit, tannins, acids) and a real flurry of delicious acidity on the finish.

Vina Gracia Merlot 1998 16 £5.00
Open, hearty, welcoming, rich, soft and leathery, this is an utterly luscious merlot of consummate quaffability.

KWIK SAVE RED

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Vina La Rosa 1999, Somerfield 16.5 £5.00
The warmth and generosity of the fruit and the tannins are meaningful enough, but there is also the beauty of the subtle wood touches to consider. Very classy wine.

M&S RED

Casa Leona Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 16.5 £5.00
Real posh fruit here with only the generosity of the cocoa and cassis undertone giving us the clue it's Chile and not Château Lafite.

Casa Leona Merlot 1999 16 £5–7
One of the most delightfully quaffable Merlots it is possible to conceive.

Sierra Los Andes Merlot Cabernet 1999 16 £5–7
The strawberry food aroma only kids you: it's serious stuff here with piles of flavour, true, but under it some gorgeous rich fruit of vivacity and vim.

Sierra Los Andes Merlot Cabernet Reserve 1998 15 £5–7
Sweeter, oddly, than the non reserve wines but still a high ranking specimen of elegance and length. It has a languorous, almost casual, fruitiness and demeanour.

MAJESTIC RED

Luis Felipe Edwards Pupilla Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14 £5.00
The Aussie now making these wines for Senor Edwards has made changes to the style. It's lusher and less well disciplined. I rate it lower.

Montes Alpha Merlot 1997 14 £7–10
Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1997 16 £5–7
Classy, correct, cosy, composed, concentrated – it hits all the right high Cs.

Santa Rita Triple C 1997 17 £10–13
Full of densely packed, gently savoury plums and pear and apricots and leather – and earthy tannins. Like a crazy claret

Valdivieso Barrel Selection Malbec 1999 16 £5–7
So soft and stealthy it slips down remarkably swiftly but then the residue of the fruit strikes home

Valdivieso Barrel Selection Merlot 1998 17 £5–7
Wonderful happy juice here: leather, spice, tannins, blackberries and plums and a hint of cinnamon and a lingering finish. Very new world. Very delicious.

Vistasur Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15.5 £5.00

MORRISONS RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 £5.00
The most vegetally interesting Chilean Cabernet I've tasted all year. Excellent food wine.

Antares Merlot 1999 13.5 £5.00
Again, a lot of juicy fruit.

Castillo de Molina Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5–7
Delicious layers of ripely textured, cassis-edged fruit which expand and contract on the taste buds with great effect. Rousing, complex finish.

Curioso Gracia de Chile Merlot 1998 16 £5.00
Very stalky, atypical Merlot, with an almost pea-pod peppery edge to the fruit. The tannins are intense and interesting. The finish is dramatic, dry. A very food friendly wine.

'M' Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15 £5.00
Dry yet rich and rolling. Not elegant but drinkable enough.

Undurraga Merlot 1999 13 £5.00
Has some opening interest but the fruit flags at the end.

Villa Montes Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15.5 £5.00
Very ripe, severely pricey but very entertaining. Lovely tannins.

Vina Gracia Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 £5.00
Soupy and warm, thickly textured, full of richness.

Vina Gracia Merlot 1998 16 £5.00
Open, hearty, welcoming, rich, soft and leathery, this is an utterly luscious merlot of consummate quaffability.

ODDBINS RED

Carmen Reserve Grande Vidure Cabernet, Maipo 1997 16 £5–7
Very Bordeaux-like in its dry tannins. But the blackcurrant fruit comes zinging through.

Carmen Reserve Merlot, Rapel 1998 16.5 £7–10
Such meat on the fruit! It's breathtakingly delicious.

Carmen Reserve Pinot Noir 1998 16 £7–10
Even Domaine de la Romanee Conti would be impressed with this aromatic aplomb.

Casa Lapostolle Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 17 £5–7
Wonderful texture. Very exciting experience.

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16.5 £7–10
Superb chewy fruit.

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Merlot, Rapel 1998 17.5 £13–20
An immense construct which as the thoughtful taster gargles with it around the molars is like some game sauce of quite unusual savoury, ripe, then sweet, then dry complexity. A truly marvellous wine.

Casa Lapostolle Merlot 1998 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous tannins

Cono Sur Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 16 £5–7
The final touch of arrogance is the cassis and coffee as it descends.

Errazuriz Merlot, Curico Valley 1999 16.5 £5–7
So textured, like ruffled velvet, that you can't figure out how it grips so lushly.

Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1998 15.5 £5.00
Very catering chocolate coloured and fruited – it'll give the claret lover apoplexy.

La Palmeria Merlot Cabernet Gran Reserva 1998 16.5 £7–10

La Palmeria Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot 1998 16.5 £5–7
Juicy and dry to finish and between these two contrasting features is a rippling river of flavour.

Santa Rita Medalla Real Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £7–10
Dry, coffee-edged, rich fruit with chewy tannins.

Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet 1998 16.5 £5–7
Tongue-tinglingly tenacious and tellingly complex. Remarkably lovely texture.

Santa Rita Reserva Merlot Unfiltered, 1999 16.5 £5–7
Mingles blackberries, raspberries and strawberries in with the dusky tannins

Veramonte Cabernet Sauvignon, Alto de Casablanca 1997 16 £5–7
Consummately concentrated, juicy, fresh, fruity, characterladen, deep, shallow, subtle, extravagant – how many contradictions can a mouthful of alcoholic grape juice contain?

Veramonte Merlot 1998 14 £5-7
The juicy end of the Merlot spectrum.

Vina Porta Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1999 16.5 ~£5.00
Superbly savoury and thickly textured with chocolate and cigar-fume laden fruit with a touch of leather and old saddlebags. Wonderful!

Vina Porta Reserva Unfiltered Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 17 £7-10
Utterly stunningly savoury cabernet with tannins, tenacity and sublime typicity.

SAFEWAY RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 ~£5.00
The most vegetally interesting Chilean Cabernet I've tasted all year. Excellent food wine.

Acacias Estate Merlot, Maipo Valley 1998, Safeway 14 ~£5.00
Very stalky and dry but it gets really rampant on the finish.

Carta Vieja Merlot 1999 14 ~£5.00
Unusually juicy and ripe Chilean. Very forward. Most stores.

Castillo de Molina Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva, Lontue 1998 16 £5-7
So friendly and full of charm you wonder how it can be the same Cabernet Sauvignon which grows elsewhere in the world. Top 157 stores

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway 16.5 ~£5.00
Quite superbly meaty fruit. Soft, ripe, perfumed, very deep and warmly textured

Chilean Red 1999, Safeway 15 ~£5.00
Warm rubbery supple fruit of plummy richness.

Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1998 16.5 ~£5.00

Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel Valley 1999 14 ~£5.00
Very jammy and immediate. Untypically Chilean.

Cono Sur Reserva Merlot 1999 16.5 £5-7
Not chilly or austere like cabernet from Bordeaux but warm, friendly, full, and huge fun. Wonderful quaffing here. Most stores.

Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon, El Ceibo Estate, Aconcagua 1998 17.5 £5-7
Wonderful baked, brown fruit here, full of fleshiness contained by a delicious shellac of prime tannins Immense drinkability combined with sublime, provocative richness. A stunning wine.

Errazuriz Merlot Reserva, Don Maximiano Estate Aconcagua, 1997 16 £7-10
Beautifully tanned, high class leather too soft for belief. Top 129 stores

Errazuriz Syrah Reserva 1998 16 £7-10
In its rich purity of fruit it combines the juiciness of Aussie shiraz with the smoky tannins and deep dryness of the northern Rhone. The result, I guess, is uniquely Chilean. Selected stores

Isla Negra Merlot 1998 16.5 £5–7
What superb dryness yet riveting rich leathery fruit! It's marvellous drinking Top 219 stores.

Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon, Alto Jahull Vineyards Maipo 1997 16 £5–7
Rampant flavoursomeness and fullness. At most stores.

TerraMater Zinfandel/Syrah, Maipo 1998 16.5 –£5.00
Gallops juicily over the taste buds in fairly rumbustious fashion, then it cools its heels, then it courses softly down the throat, and then, yes there is a further dimension, it leaves a lush, savoury afterglow. Top 157 stores.

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1997 17.5 £7–10
It's wonderfully expressive of herbs, spice, vegetal fruit and ripe tannins.

Valdivieso Malbec Reserve, Lontue 1996 15.5 £7–10

Valdivieso Single Vineyard Merlot Reserve, Lontue 1998 16.5 £7–10
Heaven has arrived!

Villard Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Central Valley 1997 16 £5–7
Classic dryness, hint of vegetality, very long, richly tannic finish. Top 121 stores.

Vina Morande Merlot 1999 15.5 –£5.00

Vina Morande Pinot Noir 1998 16 –£5.00
Only the juiciness spoils the effect of the feral aroma and wild raspberry flavour. For the price, though, more exciting than Nuits St Georges.

Vina Morande Syrah 1998 10 –£5.00
Too much sulphur in the bottle I tasted.

SAINSBURY'S RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 17 £5.00
Utter magic. Dark, rich, firm yet supple, wonderfully seriously fruity (leather, spice, blackcurrants) and hugely lingering. Brilliant for the money, quite brilliant. Selected stores.

Chilean Cabernet Merlot NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 16 –£5.00
It's the best red in a box. It has oodles of flavour, toffeed and blackcurranty, with good acids and fine tannins. It is both a great food wine and a great quaffer. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Chilean Merlot, Sainsbury's 16.5 –£5.00
Wonderful richness of tone, texture, and even a touch of soulfulness. A gorgeous, savoury, smooth wine of lingering depth.

Chilean Red, Sainsbury's 13 –£5.00

La Palma Merlot Gran Reserva 1998 17 £7–10
Such lush class! Beautiful texture, like crumpled velvet, lovely leather aroma and rich fruit. 60 stores.

Los Robles Carmenere 1999 16.5 –£5.00
Staggeringly toothsome, meaty fruit with wonderful lingering richness of

roast partridge, truffle sauce and game-chips – plus a thick gravy. Not at all stores.

MontGras Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva 1998 15.5 £5-7
Always serious contenders, MontGras wines, this example no exception. It has heavy fruit, dry yet warm and rich, and the texture, though free flowing, is full of interest and eddies of flavour Selected stores.

MontGras Carmenere Reserva 1998 14 £5-7
A big food wine. Roast vegetables and melted cheese dishes and pungent risottos. 120 stores

MontGras Single Vineyard Syrah 1999 16 £5-7
Outfruits many an Aussie Shiraz (certainly for the same money) and outlingers many a northern Rhone with the same grape. A soft, aromatic, very supple wine. 100 stores.

MontGras Single Vineyard Zinfandel 1999 15 £5-7
Has an unusual cherry spiciness and nutty edge on the finish. Not a typical zin – hugely quaffable, though. 100 stores.

Terra Mater Zinfandel Shiraz 1999 16.5 £5.00
Gallops juicily over the taste buds in fairly rumbustious fashion, then it cools its heels, then it courses softly down the throat, and then, yes there is a further dimension, it leaves a lush, savoury afterglow. Most stores

Valdivieso Malbec 1998 16 £5.00
Deliciously simple and almost casually brilliant. The fruit is effortless, polished, unpretentious, gifted and downright delicious.

Valdivieso Malbec Reserve 1998 16.5 £7-10
Quite superbly lithe and tautly muscled. Warm and satisfying fruit, hint of spice to it, and a rolling finish of multi layered depth. 135 stores.

Valdivieso Merlot 1999 15.5 £5.00
Classic Chilean double act: richness and dryness in league with hedgerow fruits. Not classic Merlot, perhaps, but classic quaffing.

SOMERFIELD RED

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Vina La Rosa 1999, Somerfield 16.5 £5.00
The warmth and generosity of the fruit and the tannins are meaningful enough, but there is also the beauty of the subtle wood touches to consider. Very classy wine.

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot Vina La Rosa 1999, Somerfield 16.5 £5.00
What a marvel of a marriage between Merlot and Cabernet. Spice, blackcurrants, leather, plums, and they're rolled up into a powerful knot of intense flavour.

Chilean Merlot 1999, Somerfield 17 £5.00
It ignites in the mouth like a leather and spicy cherry/blackcurrant grenade. Hugely impressive depth and richness here.

Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1998 17 £5-7
Nothing reserved about the fruit. It pulsates with generosity and tongue-lashing tannic tenacity.

Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1999 16 ~£5.00
Fantastic Pinot profile: rich, elegant, thorny, classic . . . and with typical Chilean extra richness and texture.

Isla Negra Merlot 1999 16.5 £5–7
Deeply delicious and warm hearted fruit of gallant texture and great depth. Has a beautiful warmth to it.

SPAR RED

Canepa Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Spar 10 ~£5.00
The least arousing Chilean Cabernet I've tasted.

Canepa Merlot 1998, Spar 15 ~£5.00
Hints of old leather to the lush fruit where tannins, like a dam, prevent the fruit bursting out. An interesting mouthful.

TESCO RED

Altum Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1997 14 £7–10

Altum Merlot Reserve 1997 14 £7–10

Canepa Zinfandel 1998 14 ~£5.00

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Tesco 16 ~£5.00
Chocolate with raspberry with a hint of earth and blackcurrant on the finish. And that's just the finish.

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1999, Tesco 16 ~£5.00
Compellingly fruity – has a hint of coffee and cream to the blackcurrant as it quits the throat.

Chilean Merlot Reserve 1999, Tesco 16 ~£5.00
Does the 16 say it all? Well, I might usefully add that this score takes into account the wine's superb balance and lingering, leathery fruit.

Chilean Red NV, Tesco 15 ~£3.50

Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1999 16 ~£5.00
Fantastic Pinot profile: rich, elegant, thorny, classic . . . and with typical Chilean extra richness and texture.

Cono Sur Pinot Noir Reserve 1996 14 £5–7
Extraordinarily thick and balsamic-rich Pinot. Sticks to the palate very warmly.

Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva 1998 16.5 £7–10
Hints of cigar box, spice, blackcurrants, raisins, liquorice and a very subtle lingering after-tang of coriander. Utterly delicious. Serious yet totally, captivatingly entertaining.

Errazuriz Merlot 1999 16.5 £5–7
Delicious quaffing and food friendly merlot with piles of flavour and leathery undertones, touch of coffee and tobacco, and a lovely warm texture. Brilliant finish, lingering and thought provoking.

Errazuriz Syrah Reserva 1998 16 £7–10
Beautifully aromatic, smooth, fruity and completely kitted out. Has hints of tobacco and cocoa to the voluptuous texture and the finish is highly cultured.

Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 ~£5.00
The jammy side of serious with its rich plums and ripe blackberries. Very

supple tannins. Delicious book-worm's bottle

Isla Negra Merlot 1999 16.5 £5–7
Deeply delicious and warm-hearted fruit of gallant texture and great depth. Has a beautiful warmth to it. Top 220 stores.

Mont Gras Quatro 1998 15 £5–7
Very aggressive at first, then it softens, then it goes tannic and dry on the finish and then it turns almost sweet and rich. Terrific wine for dinner parties (vegetarian ones especially since the wine provides a sauce of its own).

Montgras Merlot 1998 16 £5.00
Staggering good value here. The fruit is bold, leathery, hint of spice, firm and all in order from nose to throat. It energises the corpuscles and caresses the palate. At most stores

Salsa Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14 £5.00
Cheap enough and reasonably cheerful. Good rich tannins which tighten on the fruit at the finish.

Santa Catalina Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15.5 £5.00
Takes its time. It flexes its fruit muscles slowly and richly, then the tannins clock in and start to work, then more layers of blackcurrant are revealed. An interesting experience.

Santa Catalina Merlot 1999 16 £5.00
Very cigar-fumaceous riches here and the fruit, harnessing this aromatic intensity, is deep, rich, savoury and broad-shouldered. It is hardly a quaffing wine, it's far too concentrated for that, but with roast meat and vegetable dishes it would be superb.

Santa Ines Cabernet/Carmenere Reserva, Legado de Armida 1999 17.5 £5–7
Has a level richness and balanced tannicity which defies belief at this price level. The ruffled velvet texture is very classy, so are the finely meshed acids. A triumph of a wine. Totally convincing at three times the price.

Santa Ines Cabernet/Merlot 1998 16 £5.00
Unfair isn't it? A Cab/Merl this good at this price? So it's full and deep and rich and uncompromisingly fruity but it's classy with it. That's the decisive dimension

Stowells Chilean Cabernet/Merlot NV 14.5 £5.00
This production appears to have been produced by a committee but the fruit in the bottle is solid, meaty and full of typical Chilean nuances of fruit. Excellent texture

TerraMater Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5.00
Develops in graduated rivulets of flavour which linger and refresh, enliven and delight. A really gluggable Cabernet

Undurraga Familia Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 14 £7–10

Undurraga Pinot Noir 1999 14 £5.00
Not typical Pinot but a good rich mouthful of tannic tenacity.

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1997 17.5 £7–10
It's wonderfully expressive of herbs,

spice, vegetal fruit and ripe tannins. Top 85 stores.

Valdivieso Carignan 1999 16 £5.00
Lovely earthy fruit, herby and warm, with a resounding sense of pleasure-seeking demeanour. A terrific quaffing wine – as well as going robustly with food. Selected stores.

Valdivieso Malbec Reserve 1997 16.5 £7.10
Gorgeous baked fruit texture which hardens - encrusted with superb tannins. Very rich and deep, full of stylish edges, and hugely elegant overall. Selected stores only.

THRESHER RED

Caliterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15.5 £5.00
Delicious amalgam of dark cherries, blackcurrants, prunes and tannins. Serious glugging, serious food wine.

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16.5 £7–10
Superb chewy fruit.

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Merlot 1997 17.5 £10–13

Casa Lapostolle Merlot 1998 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous tannins.

Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £5.00
Consummately concentrated, juicy, fresh, fruity, characterladen, deep, shallow, subtle, extravagant – how many contradictions can a mouthful of alcoholic grape juice contain?

Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1998 16.5 £5.00
Terrific tannins, evolved and vibrant, combined with cassis and tobacco fruitiness.

Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 17.5 £5–7
Wonderful baked, brown fruit here, full of fleshiness contained by a delicious shellac of prime tannins. Immense drinkability combined with sublime, provocative richness. A stunning wine.

Errazuriz Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16 £7.10
It is not as gripping yet it's more expensive than the '98 non-reserve Cabernet. Of course, it's still a fine, elegant construct, rewarding to taste and to enjoy with food. Wine Rack only.

Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15.5 £5–7
Very catering chocolate coloured and fruited – it'll give the claret lover apoplexy.

La Palmeria Cabernet/Merlot 1998 16 £5.00
Very dark and savoury. A big-shouldered wine which pulls its weight with food.

Las Colinas Cabernet Merlot 1999 15 £5.00
Engagingly warm and ripe and really packed with firm fruit.

Las Colinas Chilean Red NV 13.5 £3.50
Dry, mild, will be swamped by most foods. Not at Wine Rack.

Las Colinas Merlot 1999 15 £5.00

Lovely texture and sunniness of disposition. Good tannins help the fruit to a solid climax.

Martins Don Rui Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 13.5 £5–7
Dries out on the palate a mite quickish from an excellent start.

Santa Ines Legado de Armida Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1997 16.5 £5–7
Almost dainty, at first sip, then it turns ferociously eloquent and rich in the back of the gullet and shows great dry character and teeth-clenchingly classy tannins.

Santa Ines Legardo de Armida Reserve Malbec 1997 16 £5–7
Rich, gentle and powerful, very dry and lingering. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Valdivieso Malbec 1998 16 £5.00
Deliciously simple and almost casually brilliant. The fruit is effortless, polished, unpretentious, gifted and downright delicious.

Valdivieso Merlot 1999 15.5 £5.00
Classic Chilean double act: richness and dryness in league with hedgerow fruits. Not classic Merlot, perhaps, but classic quaffing.

Valdivieso Reserve Pinot Noir 1996 14.5 £7–10
Good bright cherry-ripe fruit with some weight of texture. Not typical of the grape or Chile. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Veramonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16 £5–7
By far the most concentrated and convincing of the Veramonte wines: rich dark chocolate fruit with humour and weight.

Veramonte Merlot 1997 14 £5–7
The juicy end of the Merlot spectrum.

UNWINS RED

Canepa Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec 1999 16 £5.00
Juicier than many a Chilean Cab/Mal but no bad thing to be different.

Canepa Zinfandel 1999 14 £5.00
Savoury jam – with tannins.

Carmen Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 16 £5.00
Delicious, savoury, ripe plums, herbs, tannins and rich acids. Great texture and tearing fruit here.

Casa Donoso Cabernet Sauvignon Domaine Oriental 1998 12.5 £5.00
Juicy and loose on the finish. Not typical, not elegant. I cannot see what appeals to Unwins in the Donoso wines, they are patently ill-equipped.

Casa Donoso Reservado Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 12 £5–7
Juicy and jammy.

Cono Sur Reserve Pinot Noir 1998 16 £5–7
Not classic Pinot but a terrific quaffing pinot – it even has delicious earthy tannins

Donoso Limited Edition 1997 13.5 £13–20
At last! A thoroughbred tasting Donoso wine. But at seven pounds, not seventeen.

Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 17.5 £5–7

Stunning lushness yet extruded elegance – superb texture and heart-stoppingly delicious blackcurrant richness.

Errazuriz Merlot 1999 16.5 £5–7
Vivacious and full of delicious twists and turns – of raspberry, leather, cherry, subtle spices, and warm tannins. A superb Merlot.

Errazuriz Syrah Reserva 1998 16 £7–10
Big, berried fruit, rugged yet immensely soft, huge depth, flavour and commanding richness. This is even better than it was in the summer of '98 when I first tasted it.

Gracia Merlot Reserve, Aconcagua 1997 16.5 £7–10
Huge depth of flavour here, leather/blackcurrant/plum, and great developed tannins. Brilliant tone, polish, character and style

La Palmeria Merlot 1999 17 £5.00
Fantastic savoury fruit of dryly textured tenacity and great aplomb. A lovely tobacco-edge to the fruit gives it complexity, class and cohesion with the warmth of the tannins.

Penta Morande Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec 1999 16.5 £5.00
What a bargain! Lush tannins, pacy blackcurrants, incisive acids - all wrapped in a thick textured coat.

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1997 17.5 £7–10
Wonderfully expressive of herbs, spice, vegetal fruit and ripe tannins.

Vina Porta Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1999 16.5 £5.00
Superbly savoury and thickly textured with chocolate and cigar-fume laden fruit with a touch of leather and old saddlebags. Wonderful!

Vina Porta Limited Edition Merlot 1998 15 £5.00
Galloping fruit, frisky and energetic. Perfectly rich and ripe and drinkable.

Vina Porta Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5.00
Terrific tannic richness and solid, meaty fruit. Utterly convincing.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16.5 £7–10
Superb chewy fruit.

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Merlot 1997 17.5 £10–13

Casa Lapostolle Merlot 1998 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous tannins

Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1998 16.5 £5.00
Terrific tannins, evolved and vibrant, combined with cassis and tobacco fruitiness.

Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1998 14.5 £5.00

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Classic Chilean double act: richness and dryness in league with hedgerow fruits. Not classic Merlot, perhaps, but classic quaffing.

Valdivieso Reserve Pinot Noir 1996 14.5 £7–10
Good bright cherry-ripe fruit with some weight of texture. Not typical of the grape or Chile.

Veramonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16 £5–7
By far the most concentrated and convincing of the Veramonte wines' rich dark chocolate fruit with humour and weight.

Veramonte Merlot 1997 14 £5–7
The juicy end of the Merlot spectrum.

WAITROSE RED

Carmen Nativa Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 (organic) 15 £7–10
Very jammy but the resilience of the earthy tannins gives it brilliance and backbone. Not at all stores.

Errazuriz Merlot 1999 16 £5–7
Controlled yet rampant. Delightful attack of soft leathery fruit.

Gracia Estate Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva 1997 15 £5–7
Jaunty, juicy, yet finishing serious and dry.

Mont Gras Carmenere Reserva 1998 14 £5–7
A big food wine. Roast vegetables and melted cheese dishes and pungent risottos.

Valdivieso Barrel Selection Cabernet/Merlot 1997 16.5 £5–7
Marvellous evolving fruit which takes delicious seconds to go from ripe blackcurrant to spicy plum. Gorgeous texture and lingering finish.

Valdivieso Pinot Noir Reserve 1997 16 £5–7
Lovely chewy, gently exotic edge to the pinot riches which include chocolate and spicy cherries.

WINE CELLAR

Casa del Bosque Merlot 1998 12 £5–7
Not very elegant or subtle. Goes with Bangladeshi fish Madras.

Cono Sur Merlot 1999 15.5 £5–7
It's the rich, soft texture which carries the points. The fruit is in decent plummy shape, too, but the sheer velvet of the delivery is superlative.

Mapocho Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 13 –£5.00
Not the most impressive of Chilean Cabs: bland on the finish.

Mont Gras Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14.5 £5–7
Chunky and hairy-chested but not uncivilised. Lovely texture and very warm tannins

Mont Gras Quatro 1998 15 £5–7
Juicy with a hint of old tree and leaves. The Cabernet pepperiness is mildly counterpointed by the malbec's moody richness.

Valdivieso Barrel Select Merlot 1999 15.5 £5–7
Oddly sweetly-undertoned for a Chilean Merlot, but it spreads itself generously over the taste buds with plum and blackcurrant effortlessness.

Valdivieso Pinot Noir Reserve 1997 16 £5–7
Lovely chewy, gently exotic edge to the Pinot riches which include chocolate and spicy cherries.

ASDA WHITE

35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Rather like Asda's own label wine.

Casas del Bosque Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £5–7
Sauvignon as sassy and rich. Great with food.

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Asda 15.5 –£5.00
The warm style of Sauvignon, well-tailored and subtly rich. Delicious nutty edge to the finish.

Chilean White 1999, Asda 16 –£3.50
One of the country's great white wines – under three quid. It's terrifically fruity, bold and brave

Cono Sur Chardonnay 1999 14 –£5.00
Not as concentrated as previous vintages.

BOOTHS WHITE

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Gorgeous, rich, almost smoky and gently herby, nicely textured, ripe but not overbaked

Tocornal White NV 13.5 –£3.50

Via Vina Chardonnay 1999 14 –£5.00
Not as typically smooth as most Chilean Chardonnays, and it hides its fruit somewhat, but this elemental personality makes for a great aperitif.

Vistasur Chardonnay Sauvignon Vistamar 1999 13 £5.00
Odd dry edge to an eccentric fruity onslaught. Good with Chinese food.

BUDGENS WHITE

Antu Mapu Sauvignon Blanc 1999 12.5 £5.00
Very sticky rich.

Terra Andina Chardonnay 1998 14 £5.00
Ripe and melony.

Terra Andina Semillon Chardonnay 1999 14 £5.00
Very pert and bright with a good nutty fresh finish

CWS WHITE

Four Rivers Chardonnay 1998 14 £5.00

Long Slim Chardonnay Semillon 1999 13.5 £5.00
Lip smacking richness of fruit allied to pineapple acids. Good texture, if somewhat loosely assembled.

Santa Carolina Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Concentrated elegance here, but not a hair is out of place; nothing overdone. Understated? Maybe, but very classy.

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Chilean White 1999, Somerfield 15.5 £3.50
Delicious, classy, rich, firm, structured, ludicrously inexpensive.

Vina Morande Chilean Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 15.5 £5.00
Superb! Superbness, indeed, bottled.

M&S WHITE

Alta Mira Chilean White 1999 15 £5.00
Yes it's dry but it has compelling echoes of melon and strawberry. A most elegant performer.

Casa Leona Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Superb finesse here combined with personality and subtle strength. It has a lovely texture, gently plump, and a whistle-clean, lemony finish.

Casa Leona Merlot/ Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2000 14 £5.00
Dry, elegant, cherry-rich fruit of no uncertain style. An excellent food rosé.

Sierra Los Andes Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
Baked melon richness is not OTT but fresh and fine and the finish is very elegant.

Sierra Los Andes Chardonnay Reserve 1999 16 £5.75
It has some woody chewiness to add to the smooth fruit and thus the vegetality of Burgundy is an undertone. However, the richness of the fruit is pure Chilean on the finish which develops as it fades.

Sierra Los Andes Gewurztraminer 1999 16 £5.00
Stunning! Absolutely delicious! Controlled spice, good acids, great

balance. A wonderful dry style Gewürz.

MAJESTIC WHITE

Chardonnay Reserve Cono Sur 1998 16.5 £5–7
Terrific texture here, so warm and fulsome and rich yet it does not finish with OTTness - on the contrary, it shows deftness and wit.

Luis Felipe Edwards Chardonnay 1998 14 –£5.00

Santa Rita Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 1999 16 –£5.00
The best rosé under a fiver on the planet? Likely as not

Santa Rita Dona Paula Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 1998 14 –£5.00

Vistasur Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Fatter style of Sauvignon, more gooseberry richness. Lovely to glug and to drink with robust fish and smoked fish dishes

MORRISONS WHITE

35 Sur Chardonnay 1999 14.5 –£5.00
Cheerful enough, if hardly classic, but the ripe melon fruit is refreshingly balanced by good acids.

35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 –£5.00
Dry, wry and delicate on the finish. A very charming quaffing wine.

Antares Santa Carolina Chardonnay 1999 16 –£5.00
Bargain: dry melony fruit, a hint of lemon, a touch of oil, a suggestion of spice.

Antu Mapu Reserva Rosé 1999 13 –£5.00
Very cosmetic.

Antu Mapu Sauvignon Blanc 1999 13 –£3.50
Muddy on the finish. Not well defined enough.

Castillo de Molina Reserve Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Superb butter and strawberry/melon/lemon construct. Utterly delicious

Montes Alpha Chardonnay 1998 17.5 £7.10
Chile's Montrachet - if that isn't to insult it. It has a creamy vegetality, beautiful smooth texture, subtle complex charms on the tongue, and a lingering smokiness as it descends – and hits the soul.

Stowells Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV (3 litre box) 13 –£3.50
Price bracket reflects 75cl equivalent.

Villa Montes Sauvignon Blanc 1999 14 –£5.00
Oddly over-ripe Sauvignon, but good news for lovers of rich fish dishes

ODDBINS WHITE

Carmen Chardonnay, Central Valley 1998 16.5 –£5.00
Lovely plump, rich, smoky fruit of high class texture. Hint of ripe hay, soft yet dry.

Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay 1998 17 £5.7
Breathtakingly elegant, subtle, complex, rich and so quaffable it has

undertones of ambrosia and choirs of angels.

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Chardonnay 1997 18.5 £7–10
Utterly magical oily texture, huge depth of woodily creamy fruit and a magnificent finish. It is a great wine at any price and hugely drinkable and food friendly. It has everything great Meursault has and doubles it Classicists (aka snobs) will say it's OTT and the malolactic influence and the wood are too oppressive. But I think the fruit triumphs.

Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5–7
Delicious surging fruit, on the rich side of the minerally Sauvignon spectrum, but it has excitement

Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc 1999 17 £5–7
Even more complex than the '98, more svelte

Casablanca Neblus Botrytis Chardonnay 1997 (half-bottle) 16 £5.00
Odd, very odd, a dry honey wine of nuttiness and waxy texture but not a hint of sweetness. Fine Wine Stores.

Casablanca Santa Isabel Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5–7
Superb woody polish to the rich fruit which maintains an even flow of substance and style, lingering and subtly lush, for its whole performance.

Casablanca Santa Isabel Gewurztraminer 1999 14 £5–7
A very dry, subtly spicy wine for moules

Cono Sur Gewurztraminer 1999 16 £5.00
Delightfully dry Gewürz! The spiciness is controlled and clean, the medley of roseate fruit and flavours trim and well-honed, the finish lingering and subtly lavish

Errazuriz La Escultura Estate Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998 17.5 £5–7
Nuts, touch of smoke, hint of spice, complex soft and hard fruits, lingering finish of polish and satin-textured excitement. A lovely wine.

Errazuriz Wild Ferment Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998 17 £7–10
A beautiful flaxen plastic cork; gorgeous golden wine. Like a throbbing Meursault made in Alsace in conditions they only get in Provence. Wine with soul.

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Lovely smoky melon fruit.

La Palmeria Chardonnay Gran Reserva 1998 15.5 £7–10
Has Burgundian pretensions, which isn't to insult it, so much as to convey the nature of its creamy vegetality. It's all Chilean though on the finish, where there's a soft nuttiness. Overall, an elegant wine of substance, subtlety and class.

Veramonte Chardonnay, Alto de Casablanca 1998 14 £5–7

Villard Chardonnay, Casablanca Valley 1998 16 £7–10
Delicious ripeness and plumpness here. Real big, mouthfilling richness.

Villard Reserve 15.5 £7–10

Chardonnay, Casablanca Valley 1998
More lemon than the non-reserve and arguably more complex but I'm not persuaded it's better value.

Vina Porta Chardonnay, Cachapoal 1998 14 –£5.00

SAFEWAY WHITE

35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Rich and ready. Excellent food wine.

Chilean Dry White 2000, Safeway 16 –£3.50
Quite superb subtly grassy yet rich-to-finish fruit. Much better than a hundred Sancerres.

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc Lontue 1999, Safeway 16 –£5.00
Superb freshness and compelling cleanness if subtle richness. Lovely fish wine.

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc/Chardonnay 1999, Safeway 15.5 –£5.00
Delightful combo of melon and lemon. A very bonny blend of grapes.

Cono Sur Chardonnay 1999 14 –£5.00
Very rich and ripe.

Cordillera Estate Oak Aged Chardonnay Reserva 1997, Safeway 15.5 –£5.00

Errazuriz La Escultura Estate Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998 17.5 £5–7
Nuts, touch of smoke, hint of spice, complex soft and hard fruits, lingering finish of polish and satin textured excitement. A lovely wine.

TerraMater Estates Sauvignon Blanc, Select Cuvee, 1999 15.5 £5–7
Unusually assertive asparagus and tight gooseberry fruit. Remarkably efficient food wine.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5.00
Very grassy and fresh. Selected stores.

Canepa Winemaker's Selection Gewürztraminer 1999 16.5 –£5.00
Gewürz as spice, sure, but also as a playful (if gently crisp) construct of massive quaffability. Soft, roseate, subtle yet insistent.

Casablanca Sauvignon Blanc 1998 14.5 –£5.00

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé NV, Sainsbury's 15.5 –£5.00

Chilean Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's 15 –£5.00

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV, Sainsbury's 15.5 –£5.00

Chilean Semillon Sauvignon NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 13.5 £3.50
The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

La Palmeria Chardonnay Gran Reserva 1998 15.5 £7–10
Has Burgundian pretensions, which isn't to insult it, so much as to convey the nature of its creamy vegetality. It's all-Chilean though on the finish, where there's a soft nuttiness. Overall,

an elegant wine of substance, subtlety and class

MontGras Reserve Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
A big, chewy, very musky and woody food wine. Terrific with fish dishes with complex sauces. Not at all stores.

Santa Carolina Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Concentrated elegance here, but not a hair is out of place; nothing overdone. Understated? Maybe, but very classy. Most stores.

Stowells Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV (3 litre box) 15.5 £3.50
Dry, dainty, deliciously controlled and gooseberryish. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc, Canepa 1999, Somerfield 16 £5.00
Simply superb balance and charm here.

Chilean Semillon Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 16 £5.00
Compelling blend offering a sushi-knife-edged keenness allied to gooseberries and a hint of ripe melon. Lovely wine.

Chilean White 1999, Somerfield 15.5 £3.50
Delicious, classy, rich, firm, structured, ludicrously inexpensive.

Cono Sur Viognier 1999 16 £5.00
Delicious apricot fruit with a touch of apple and pineapple and a vigorous finish. Limited distribution.

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Even more energy and richness to the new vintage.

Vina Morande Chilean Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 15.5 £5.00
Superb! Superbness, indeed, bottled.

SPAR WHITE

Canepa Chilean Chardonnay 1999, Spar 14.5 £5.00
Anxious moments as you wonder if the rich fruit will last to the throat, but it does

Canepa Chilean Sauvignon Blanc 1998, Spar 14 £5.00
Touch sullen, but picks up some warmth on the finish

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc 1998 15.5 £5.00

TESCO WHITE

Chilean Chardonnay Reserve 1998, Tesco 15.5 £5.00
Gallops along nicely over the taste buds with perhaps more soft-hooved richness than most Chilean Chardonnays. Touch more exoticism on the finish, though it's subtle.

Chilean Chardonnay, Tesco 14 £5.00

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV, Tesco 14.5 £5.00

Chilean White NV, Tesco 14.5 £5.00

Cono Sur Gewürztraminer 1999 16 £5.00

Delightfully dry Gewürz! The spiciness is controlled and clean, the medley of roseate fruit and flavours trim and well-honed, the finish lingering and subtly lavish. 100 selected stores.

Errazuriz Chardonnay 1999 16 £6–7
Very distinguished in feel as it slithers over the taste buds, proving, if any further proof were necessary, that Chile makes abundantly toothsome Chardonnays at a remarkable price.

Errazuriz Chardonnay Reserva 1997 16 £7.10
Deep and richly resounding, it has hauteur and highly developed manners. Very classy and cool. Not at all stores.

Santa Ines Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5.00
Remarkable able-bodied wine for the money, offering as it does such precision of purpose and poise in effect.

Stowells Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV 12 £5.00
Untypically blowsy for a Chilean wine. Where, Stowells, did you lose the elegance we take for granted with Chilean Sauvignons?

TerraMater Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5.00
Deliciously textured and plump, lingering fruit of subtle dexterity and a calm, cool finish of class and precision.

Undurraga Chardonnay/ Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £5.00
Odd effect but it's an odd blend (Loire with Burgundy, as the French would grouch) but it's an excellent rich fish wine.

Undurraga Gewürztraminer 1998 13.5 £5.00

Vina Casablanca Santa Isabel Sauvignon Blanc 1998 16 £5–7
Very clotted and rich but this relents on the finish. A food wine paramountly - rich scallop and sole and monkfish dishes. 100 selected stores

THRESHER WHITE

Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc 1999 17 £5.7
Even more complex than the '98, more svelte.

Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Chardonnay 1997 17 £5.00
Beautifully ornate fruit, oily and rippling with multi flavoured riches, and the acidity gives the whole structure backbone and precision.

La Palmeria Chardonnay 1998 16 £5.00
Amazing price for such a surge of poised, precise, purposeful fruit. Not at Wine Rack or Bottoms Up.

Las Colinas Chardonnay 1999 15 £5.00
Curious bruised apple and baked pear fruit. Delicious!? In its own way.

Las Colinas Riesling 1997 15.5 £5.00
Riesling as dry-edged, sullenly rich, demure and subtle. Needs food. Not at Wine Rack.

Santa Ines Legardo de Armida Reserve Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5.7
Wonderful! Has overtones of the New World, creamy and rich, and

undertones of the Burgundian old. vegetal and aristocratic. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Veramonte Chardonnay 1998 13.5 £5–7
A very manufactured and constructed Veramonte. Everything about it reeks 'Look at me! Aren't I cute!?' No, baby, no. Wine Rack only.

UNWINS WHITE

Canepa Semillon, Colchagua Valley 1999 16.5 £5.00
Great value here for a wonderfully rich, textured wine of fruity butter oiliness and fine interwoven acids. Terrific style and oomph to it yet it isn't OTT or too obvious

Casa Donoso Chardonnay Domaine Oriental 1999 13 £5.00
Very untypical and inelegant.

Casa Donoso Reservado Chardonnay Domaine Oriental 1999 12 £5–7
Odd, not good.

Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay 1998 17 £5–7
Breathtakingly elegant, subtle, complex, rich and so quaffable it has undertones of ambrosia and choirs of angels.

Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Chardonnay, Casablanca 1996 17.5 £7–10
One of the best Chardonnays in the world. Simply gorgeous texture, complex fruit and sheer charm.

Casablanca Chardonnay 1998 15.5 £5–7

Concha y Toro Gewürztraminer 1999 16 £5.00
Wonderful spicy richness and rosy-edged fruit. Marvellous smell, tang and finish. Great spicy fish wine.

Errazuriz Wild Ferment Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998 17 £7–10
A beautiful flaxen plastic cork; gorgeous golden wine. Like a throbbing Meursault made in Alsace in conditions they only get in Provence. Wine with soul

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1997 16 £7–10
Plump and delicious.

La Palmeria Chardonnay 2000 15.5 £5.00
Subtle yet substantial, deep yet delicate, energetic yet easy-going.

Valdivieso Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00
Gorgeous chewy fruit, vegetal and ripe but classy, bold and absurdly cheap.

Valdivieso Reserve Chardonnay 1997 15.5 £5–7
Delicious but unreserved.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc 1999 17 £5–7
Even more complex than the '98, more svelte.

Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Chardonnay 1997 17 £5.00
Beautifully ornate fruit, oily and rippling with multi-flavoured riches, and the acidity gives the whole structure backbone and precision.

Cono Sur 15.5 £5.00
Gewürztraminer 1998
A dry example of the grape, and very fresh, but great with oriental food.

La Palmeria Chardonnay 16 £5.00
1998
Amazing price for such a surge of poised, precise, purposeful fruit.

Las Colinas Chardonnay 15 £5.00
1999
Curious bruised apple and baked pear fruit. Delicious!? In its own way.

Las Colinas Riesling 1997 15.5 £5.00
Riesling as dry-edged, sullenly rich, demure and subtle. Needs food. Not at Wine Rack.

Santa Ines Legardo de Armida Reserve 16.5 £5–7
Chardonnay 1998
Wonderful! Has overtones of the New World, creamy and rich, and undertones of the Burgundian old: vegetal and aristocratic.

Veramonte Chardonnay 15 £5–7
1998
A very manufactured and constructed Veramonte. Everything about it reeks 'Look at me! Aren't I cute!?' No, baby, no.

WAITROSE WHITE

Canepa Semillon, 16.5 £5.00
Colchagua Valley 1999
Great value here for a wonderfully rich, textured wine of fruity butter oiliness and fine interwoven acids. Terrific style and oomph to it yet it isn't OTT or too obvious.

Carmen Vineyards 16 £5–7
Insigne Gewürztraminer
1999
Warm, spicy, sticky, rich and very jaunty and easy-going. It has a real joyous strain running through it.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Casa del Bosque 10 £5–7
Sauvignon Blanc 1998
The feeblest Chilean Sauvignon Blanc I ever wet my whistle with

La Palmeria Chardonnay 16 £5.00
1999
Gorgeous buttery richness, hint of lemon, touch of ogen melon

CYPRUS

The days of Cyprus sherry are dead. The vineyards that grew the grapes, however, are capable of much greater things. I have, though, yet to taste more than the odd one, but the potential is patently there.

ASDA RED

Ancient Isle Red 1998 15.5 £3.50

CWS RED

Mountain Vines Reserve Cabernet/Maratheftiko 1999, Co-op 16 £5.00

One of the odder wines I tasted this year in that the Maratheftiko adds a curious nutty, cooked, almost herby/spicy element to the dry, peppery Cabernet and the result is some extremely engaging fruit of lingering lushness. Superstores only.

CWS WHITE

Island Vines White Wine 1998, Co-op 15.5 £3.50

Mountain Vines Sémillon 1999, Co-op 13 £5.00

Nice to sip in its country of origin, under a rich blue sky. Superstores only.

ENGLAND

This pitifully wet and windy wine producer struggles to create drinkable white wines from scrawny grapes, jejune reds from the wrong varieties, and sullen bubblies from anything. There are, it is true, half a dozen accomplished English wine producers but most are in it for much the same reason that a man creates Canterbury Cathedral out of ten million matchsticks - or rather a combustible miniature facsimile of that marvellous temple.

WAITROSE RED

Chapel Down Epoch I 10 £5–7
1998
Has some intriguing aromatic qualities but the finish? Like a British heavyweight boxer . . . splat! Out for the count.

ASDA WHITE

Three Choirs Coleridge Hill English White 1998 12 ~£5.00

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Denbies Estate English table Wine NV 10 ~£5.00

TESCO WHITE

Chapel Down Bacchus 12 ~£5.00
1997

Chapel Down Summerhill Oaked NV 12 ~£5.00

WAITROSE WHITE

Chapel Down Flint Dry 13.5 ~£5.00
1998
Yes, well, it is flinty and it is dry. Time to swallow my words where English wine is concerned? Almost. Almost.

Summerhill Oaked Dry White NV 12 ~£5.00
Bit gooey with a touch of plank.

FRANCE

France was once the wine producer that everyone copied (and certain Aussies still do, not having entirely given up their European wet dreams). Its share of the UK wine market has dropped dramatically over the past decade. Bordeaux, Burgundy and Champagne still remain areas where no one should buy without in depth knowledge of specific individual pro ducers It is Languedoc and Roussillon, and the southern Rhône, where the rich, complex, generous wines are born and raised and being so in increasing numbers.

ASDA RED

Beaujolais Villages 1998, Asda 14 £5.00
Lovely sweet/tannin finish on it gives it great lingering classiness. It is a complex claret, possessing remarkable quaffability.

Bourgeuil Domaine de l'Ereau 1999 13.5 £5.7
Needs time to come around. Very very dry.

Buzet Cuvée 44 1997 15 £5.00
Good stuff! And stuffed with generous tannins and savoury fruit.

Château de Parenchere Bordeaux Supérieur 1997 16.5 £5.7
A superb young claret. Textures, classy, rich, handsomely tannic and well concentrated.

Château Guerin Bellevue Saint-Emilion 1997 16 £5.7
Simply one of the best clarets around for the money. Superb texture and concentration.

Château Haut Canteloupe Médoc 1998 16.5 £7.10
Château Lahore Bergez, Fitou 1998 16.5 £5.00
Superb richness, character, weight and finesse. Yes, it has some mild rusticity but this is its charm. It's a great food wine.

Château Vieux Gabiran 1999 (organic) 14 £5.00
Mild fruit, not too dry; subtle modern hints.

Chénas 1997, Asda 14 £5.00

Claret NV, Asda 14.5 £3.50

Comte de Gasparin, Côtes du Rhône 1997 16 £5.7
Curiously cheeky Rhône red. It carries its herby tannins with vigour, youth and ripe intent.

Domaine de Picheral VdP d'Oc 1999 (organic) 15 £5.00

Delicious softness and ripeness with a nice lining (warm) of Midi herbs and a touch of earth.

Domaine des Hardiers Anjou-Villages 1999 16.5 £5.00
The essence of what fine Cabernet Franc from the Loire is. And at £4.29! It beggars belief (or will, if you let this wine age for up to seven more years). It's dry, raspberry/strawberry/leather/pepper and plum fruited, and it finishes lingeringly and with a certain plumpness.

Domaine Pont Pinot Noir 1996 13 £5–7

La Domeque 'Vieilles Vignes' Syrah 1997 16 £5–7
Jammy hints to a dry wine of great style. Superb acids balance the warm fruit.

Merlot, Vin de Pays d'Oc 1998, Asda 15 £3.50
Terrific earthy bite and dark cherry fruit.

Moulin-à-Vent Oak Aged 1997, Asda 13.5 £5–7

Oak Aged Côtes du Rhône 1999, Asda 15 £5.00
Juicy, dark cherries, jam and good clods of earth and Rhône warmth.

Organic Claret Château Vieux Georget, Bordeaux 1998 15.5 £5–7
If this is what happens when Bordeaux goes organic, then maybe they should try it. Brilliant quaffability here

Réserve du Mouton 1997 13.5 £5–7

Tramontane Grenache VdP d'Oc 1998, Asda 16 £5.00
Juicy with hints of herbs. Great rollicking style.

Tramontane Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999, Asda 16 £5.00
Again that delicious characterful earthiness

Tramontane Red VdP de l'Aude 1999, Asda 15 £3.50
Brilliant earthy richness and ripeness. Real bargain here.

Tramontane Réserve Oak Aged Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998, Asda 14.5 £5.00

Tramontane Réserve Syrah VdP d'Oc 1996, Asda 16.5 £5–7
Superb Aussie confidence-shaker. From Aussies in the Languedoc this lovely rich, deep, aromatic, textured wine knocks many a homespun Aussie wine into a cocked hat

Tramontane Syrah VdP d'Oc 1997, Asda 13.5 £5.00

Tramontane Syrah/Merlot VdP d'Oc 1997, Asda 14.5 £3.50

Vacqueyras Domaine de l'Oiselet 1999 16.5 £5–7
Superbly herby and ripe, rivulets of leather/plump blackcurrant fruit and marvellous alert tannins. Gorgeous fruit of great style here.

BOOTHS RED

Bergerac Organic Red 1998 14 £5.00
Gently earthy fruit and juicy tannins.

Bergerac Rouge NV, Booths 13 £3.50
So rustic in demeanour and earthiness that the assiduous drinker might examine his glass for evidence of toenail clippings from the peasants who pressed the grapes.

Bourgogne Rouge Jean-Luc Joillet 1998 12.5 £5–7
Oh my! All those grapes! What a dull end to so much growth.

Bourgueil Domaine Pierre Gautier 1995 15 £5.00

Cahors 1998 14 £5.00
Rustic chewiness and very warmly textured fruit.

Chapoutier La Ciboise Coteaux du Tricastin 1998 13.5 £5.00
An impressively rich organic red with a lovely herby undertone. Unique Rhône personality to it.

Château Ducla, Bordeaux 1997 15 £5–7

Château l'Euziere Pic St-Loup 1997 14.5 £5–7

Château Mayne-Vieil, Fronsac 1996 16.5 £5.00
What wonderful claret! Lovely cheroot undertoned richness, great dryness, yet a compelling fruity finish. Sophisticated and svelte.

Château Pierrail Bordeaux Supérieur 1996 15 £5–7

Château Pouchaud-Larquey, Bordeaux 1996 15.5 £5–7

Chaume Arnaud Domaine Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1998 (organic) 17 £7–10
It develops on the palate with insidious deliciousness providing herbs, savoury tannins, a hint of rustic orchards, and a deal of characterful texture. Marvellous stuff.

Côtes du Rhône-Villages Georges Darriaud 1998 13.5 £5–7
Odd juicy edge as it finishes.

Domaine du Trillol Corbières 1996 13.5 £5.00

Faugères Gilbert Alquier 1997 15 £7–10

Fitou Madame Parmentier 1998 13.5 £5.00
Very juicy edge, touch loose here (as it finishes).

Gigondas Domaine Paillere et Pied 1998 16 £7–10
Superb lesson in integrated rich, soft tannicity and herb-drenched plums, blackberries and baked earth. Hugely civilised tippling.

Julienas Paul Boutinot 1997 11 £5–7
Uninspiring, largely.

La Passion Rouge VdP de Vaucluse 1999 14 £3.50
A charming, dry party wine. Works well chilled with fish, too.

La Réserve du Reverend Corbières 1999 13.5 £5.00
Becomes very juicy in this vintage. Not as gripping as previously.

Marcillac 1997 15 £5–7

Oak Aged Claret Bordeaux Supérieur NV, Booths 14 £5.00
Genuine claret of tannic tenacity yet soft natural finishing charms.

Old Git Grenache Syrah 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Great fun. I'm bound to love the name and the dry, Midi fruit.

Pernands Vergelesses, Cornu 1997 10 £7–10

Rasteau Domaine des Coteaux des Travers 1998 16.5 £6–7
Thrilling tannins to marvellously complex, dry and earthy fruit which melts in the mouth to reveal hedgerow juice as it finishes.

Vin Rouge NV, Booths 11 ~£3.50
Well, the label's on straight. And the fruit's honest – honestly boring

BUDGENS RED

Bourgogne Rouge Vienot 1996 12 £5–7

Château de Malijay Côtes du Rhône 1996 13.5 ~£5.00

Corbières Château Saint-Louis 1997 13 ~£5.00
Raisiny and maturing fast. Good for robust casseroles

Côtes du Rhône-Villages Cuvée Réserve 1997 14 ~£5.00

Côtes Marmandais, Beaupuy 1996 13.5 ~£5.00

Domaine St-Roche VdP de l'Aude NV 12 ~£3.50
Rustic bargain: socks, planks, earth . . . oh . . . yes, grapes.

Gargantua Côtes du Rhône 1997 14 ~£5.00

Organic Red VdP du Pays du Gard NV 13 ~£3.50
Soft and plummy and very direct.

Premium Oaked Cabernet Franc/Syrah VdP d'Oc, Devereux NV 15.5 ~£3.50
The best red wine bargain on Budgens' shelves: rich, dry, characterful, blackcurranty and plummy, good thwack of Midi sun.

CWS RED

Beloup St-Chinian 1998 14.5 ~£5.00
Grand little juicy glugger.

Château Laurençon Bordeaux Supérieur 1998 14 ~£5.00
Smoky-charcoal edge to the fruit. Great wine for meat dishes. Superstores only.

Château Pierrousselle Bordeaux 1999 14 ~£5.00
A pleasant little claret of admirable tannins

Chevaliere Réserve Grenache Vieilles Vignes 1998 14 ~£5.00
Soft and ripe, full of fruit. Not subtle, this wine.

Claret NV 15 ~£3.50
Possibly – no, *is* the cheapest drinkable, well-ordained claret in the UK for the money. Decant it into big jugs when wine buffs come to dinner and watch them dispute which château it is.

Corbières Rouge NV, Co-op 15 ~£3.50

Corso Merlot 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
A Corsican red of compelling warmth and spicy richness. Lovely texture and balance and stylish finish of some weight. Superstores only.

Domaine les Combelles Minervois 1998 13.5 ~£5.00
Not the bustling busybody of the '96. Superstores only.

Fleurie Pierre Leduc 1998 13.5 £7–10

La Baume Syrah 1997 15.5 ~£3.00

Louis Mousset Crozes-Hermitage 1997 15 £5–7

Oak Aged Claret NV, Co-op 13 ~£5.00
Touch crusty and old hat.

Rhône Valley Red 1999 14.5 ~£3.50
Very juicy and jammy but the tannins tighten and heighten the final effect.

Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic) 16.5 £5–7
Wonderful energy and strikingly stylish tannins here. Offers hedgerow fruit, herbs, a soft earthiness, and brilliant tannins as it glides effortlessly home. Superstores only.

Vin de Pays d'Oc Cabernet Merlot NV, Co-op 15 ~£3.00

Vin de Pays d'Oc Cabernet Sauvignon, Co-op 14 ~£3.50
Cabernet as charming as they come: soft, ripe, blackcurranty.

Vin de Pays d'Oc Merlot NV, Co-op 14.5 ~£3.50

Vin de Pays d'Oc Syrah, Co-op 14 ~£3.50
Sheer happiness bottled. Jammy and delicious.

Vin de Pays d'Oc Syrah/Malbec, Co-op (vegetarian) 14 ~£5.00

KWIK SAVE RED

Broully Les Celliers de Bellevue 1998 12 £5–7
Too pricey.

Cabernet Malbec VdP d'Oc 1997 13.5 ~£3.50

Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield 14 ~£3.50
Real blackcurrant and pepper – but very soft and thick.

Claret NV, Somerfield 13.5 ~£3.50
Claret as real juice of the vine: no earth, no stalks, no green leaves.

Corbières Rouge Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield 15 ~£3.50
Superb texture and tension between spicy plums, tannins (savoury) and subtle acids. What a bargain!

Fitou Rocher d'Ambrée 1998, Somerfield 14.5 ~£5.00
Sticky tar tannins make it a real mouthful

Les Oliviers VdT Francais Red NV 12 ~£2.50

March Hare VdP d'Oc 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

Minervois Château la Reze 1996 16 ~£3.50
Wonderful teeth-embracing, tongue-curling, throat-charming, fruit of style and wit. Fantastic value.

Morgon 1998 12.5 ~£5.00

Rivers Meet Merlot/Cabernet, Bordeaux 1997 14 ~£5.00

Skylark Hill Merlot VdP d'Oc 1997 15.5 ~£3.50

Skylark Hill Syrah VdP d'Oc 1997 15.5 £3.50

Skylark Hill Very Special Red VdP d'Oc 1997 14 £3.50

St-Didier VdP du Tarn 1997 15.5 £3.50

VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardèche Rouge 1999, Somerfield 14 £3.50
Dry, hint of rustic sod, barbecue wine.

M&S RED

Abbaye de Tholomies Minervois 1996 16.5 £5–7
Superb texture, ruffled velvet with touches of raw denim. Perfect balance of alcohol and tannins, fruit and acidity, herbs and meat. A masterpiece of rustic richness and unpretentious gluggability.

Burgundy Pinot Noir 1998 12 £7–10
Always something rum when a wine says it's Burgundy *and* Pinot Noir. I'm surprised it's allowed. But then that's true of so much modern Burgundy.

Château de Sauvanes Faugères 1997 15.5 £5–7
Marvellous casserole mouthful. A savoury, dry wine of tannins and tenacity.

Château de Surville Costières de Nîmes 1998 15 £5–7
Gripping tannins here of great style, and they give the fruit succulence and a terrific texture and dry food-friendliness

Château des Lanes, Corbières 1998 16 £5–7
Gorgeous medley of herbs and hedgerow fruits here plus strong tannins holding the whole structure tightly together. A deliciously compact, seriously fruity specimen.

Château Planezes, Côtes du Roussillon-Villages 1998 16.5 £5–7
What warmth and savoury stealth here! It oozes class like an exceptional claret (curiously, given its grapes, not like a northern Rhône). Super all-action red with depth and daring. The spicy plum and peppery richness of the fruit is jammy but never OTT. The finish is complex, concentrated, classy.

Côtes du Parc, Coteaux du Languedoc 1999 (organic) 15.5 £5.00
A wonderful dry organic red. Lovely character and bite to it. The Midi earth is very active in the wine.

Devois des Agneaux Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 15.5 £7–10
Juicy but deliciously dry and food-friendly. Has lovely herbs and hints of tobacco

Domaine St-Pierre VdP de l'Herault 1999 11 £3.50

Gold Label Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998 15 £5.00
Juicy yet authentically blackcurrant rich – not an obvious wine. It has some hidden passages to explore.

Gold Label Reserve Barrel Aged Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998 16.5 £5–7
Superb meaty fruit, touch of old cheroot to the spicy plums and blackberries, and a great rousing finish

of oregano and coriander. Brilliant dinner party companion

Gold Label Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999 16 £5.00
Delicious – one of the most convincing reds at this price here. Rich ripe fruit, deftly herby and warm, dry to finish, not overly tannic, good texture.

House Red Wine, VdP du Comte Tolosan 1999 12 £3.50
Basic, touch brutal.

La Tour du Prevot Côtes du Ventoux 1999 16 £5.00
This is what terrific under-a-fiver French country reds are all about: deep, herby, rich, warm, drinkable, unpretentious, food-friendly, full of character. I like this wine a lot.

Margaux 1997 13.5 £10–13
Very drinkable. But £13?

Merlot Cave de Rauzan 1998 13.5 £5.00
Juicy and soft.

Oak Aged Bordeaux 1997 13 £5–7
Good perfume but gets confused on the finish as juicy fruit and wood tannins clash.

MAJESTIC RED

Beaune 1er Cru Les Chauacheaux 1997 12 £13–20

Beaune Louis Latour 1997 11 £7–10
Dull.

Beaune-Epenotes 1979 10 £20+

Bois de Lamothe Cabernet Franc, Côtes de Duras 1997 16 £3.50
Fantastic value: black, sticky-cherry fruit with good, volcanic tannins alongside and a finish of textured richness. Great glugging and food wine

Bott-Geyl Pinot Noir Beblenheim 1997 15.5 £7–10
A real aficionado's, of which I am one, delight: bitter and twisted fruit, real farmyard pong, great nutty richness on the finish.

Bourgeuil La Vernelle 1997 16 £5.00
The essence of young great Cab Franc: cherry and raspberry, slate tiles, rich and ready. Very dry.

Bouton d'Or Cairanne, Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1998 14 £5.00
Unusually ripe and fresh.

Calvet Reserve Claret 1998 14.5 £5–7
Best vintage yet of this wine. Most charming and good value. A real dry yet fruity claret.

Cave de Ribeauville Pinot Noir 1998 14 £5–7
Try it chilled with fish. It's magic. truffley and cherried

Chambolle-Musigny Jaffelin 1996 10 £10–13
Just so dull and unexceptional.

Château de Bosc Côtes du Rhône 1997 11 £5–7

Château de Candale, Haut-Médoc 1996 14 £10–13

Château de Gaudou Cuvée Tradition Cahors 1998 15.5 £5.00
Superb earthy richness here, a woody, chewy edge to it is very stern and

takes no prisoners, but the final flow of blackcurrant depth is compelling.

Château de Haute Serre Cahors 1989 13 £7–10
Too juicy, too old.

Château de Nardon 1998 14 £5–7
Very stalky and dry – hint of juiciness on the finish

Château de Sales, Pomerol 1996 13.5 £20+

Château Flauguergues Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 17.5 £5–7
Very elegant. The tannins and the fruit are deliciously melded and softened one into the other and the finish is excellent. A very serious yet fun-to-drink wine.

Château Guiot Costières de Nîmes 1999 15.5 £5.00
Delicious richness and textured ripeness. Charming rusticity, controlled and concentrated.

Château Haut Mazières, Bordeaux 1997 14 £5–7
Dry with a struggling border of richness.

Château l'Abbaye de St-Ferme Bordeaux Supérieur 1998 15.5 £5–7
Superb value for a dry, classy claret. Brilliant with roast meats.

Château Lamartine, Côtes de Castillon 1997 15 £5–7
Splendid stalky richness. Very gruff-voiced and vigorous.

Château Ludon Pomies Agassac, Bordeaux 1997 12 £10–13
Very sweet to finish.

Château Méaume Bordeaux Supérieur 1997 16 £5–7
Lovely lively-tannined claret. It's the way to go, messieurs!!!

Château Morin, St-Estephe 1997 16.5 £7–10
Old-fashioned but awesomely French and historically correct. Unbendingly dry and tannic, it has lovely blackcurrant (almost cassis) richness – but the dryness! It crunches the back teeth.

Château Tour Saint-Paul, Bordeaux Supérieur 1997 13 £5–7

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Domaine Cailloux 1997 13 £10–13

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Domaine Pegau 1997 14.5 £13–20
Lovely tannins and sweet to-finish fruit. But £20? Well, the wine, if impressive, is not grand value. At £20 you want magic in a wine and this is merely delicious.

Chinon les Garous, Couly-Dutheil 1997 16 £5–7
Classic Cab Franc with hints of wild raspberry insinuated into the dry-yet-rich coal edged fruit. Delicious chilled with fish.

Claret Cuvée 090 1998 14 £5.00

Claret Lot 278 1998 14 £5.00
A thoroughly claret-like claret. Preposterous? It happens – sometimes. These remarkable coincidences of intention with effect are romantic and easy to swallow

Corbières Domaine Madelon 1999 14 £5.00
Very sweet finishing.

Corton Grancey Grand Cru 1995 12.5 £20+

Coteaux du Tricastin Domaine Saint-Remy 1997 15 £5.00

Côte de Nuits-Villages Louis Latour 1996 10 £7–10
Dull

Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1997 14 £5–7
Good basic CdR at, sadly, an above-average CdR price.

Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998 16 £7–10
Always, incredibly, a consistently rich and svelte performer on the taste buds.

Côtes du Rhone Les Chevaliers aux Lys d'Or 1998 13 £3.50
Thin, anodyne – like a supermodel on Sundays.

Côtes du Ventoux Vidal-Fleury 1998 14 £5.00
Falls away a bit on the finish but very drinkable and fruity upfront.

Crozes-Hermitage Cave Tain l'Hermitage 1998 14 £5–7
Bacon bits and fresh liquefied coal.

Domaine de l'Ile St-Pierre Cabernet Franc 1998 16.5 £5.00
More tannins here than your average racing saddle. As such it might seem fearsome, but the fruit is also racy and urgent and the overall effect is of a quirky claret from a brilliant, undiscovered château. A great grilled food wine: savoury and cheroot-tinged.

Domaine de la Closerie St-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil 1997 13 £5–7

Domaine de Rodes Grenache VdP d'Oc 1998 15 £5.00
Sweet, delicious, modern. Hasn't the tannin or depth of its Syrah brother.

Domaine de Rodes Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998 16.5 £5.00
Quite superb richness and complex, earthy fruit here. Amazing value at the two-bottle price (£3.49)

Domaine des Bois du Garn Côtes du Vivarais 1998 16 £5.00
Lovely herby, rustic richness here. Has terrific tannins

Fixin Jaffelin 1996 12 £7–10

Gigondas Guigal 1997 16.5 £10–13
Sweet, dark, herby, subtle mineral edge – a classic Gigondas.

Givry 1er Cru Steinmaier 1998 15 £7–10
Love the slaty dryness. Odd Burgundy but the oddness is not egregious so much as quirkily unfashionable.

Givry Louis Latour 1997 11 £7–10

Grenache/Cabernet VdP de l'Ardèche 1998 16 £3.50
A superb bargain. One of the most satisfying under-£3 reds, dry and rich, I've tasted. Snap it up for parties!

Hautes-Côtes de Beaune Cave Co-op 1997 13.5 £5–7
Not revolting but not hugely palate-engaging either. A modern Burgundy, high priced for the meat on offer, which is too bony for this drinker.

La Fauve Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998 15 £5.00

La Fauve Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998 15.5 £5.00

La Ramillade Gigondas 1998 15 £7–10
Very warm and sweetly dispositioned

Lirac Domaine de la Rocalière 1997 16 £5–7
Excellent array of Rhône values: dryness, richness, tannicity, earthiness, textured plumpness and a bravura finish.

Mâcon St-Gengoux 1998 14 £5.00
Just about makes its rating though it'll curdle New World wine-fruit lovers' toenails It's dry, a touch earthy and mildly gravelly. Good with food, though

Madiran Meinjarre Alain Brumont 1997 15 £5–7
Has the typical Madiran hard edge which is superb with food. It has loads of personality and richness and finishes very fresh and firm. Loads of great acids temper the fruit and tannin.

Mas de Bressades Cabernet Syrah VdP du Gard 1998 17 £5–7
Splendid, irreproachable tannins linked to thrusting hedgerow ripeness and characterfulness. Marvellous stuff!

Mas de Guiot Cabernet Syrah VdP du Gard 1998 17.5 £5–7
Utterly superb blend of grapes providing vegetality, texture, richness and hugely well-tempered tannins of great style. A superb wine to surprise even the most buffed-up of wine buffs

Merlot VdP de la Haute Vallée de l'Aude 1998 14 £3.50
Cheap and very cheerful.

Morgon Jean Descombes 1998 13 £7–10

Pernand-Vergelesses Jaffelin 1996 12.5 £7–10

Régnié Vallières 1998 14 £5.00
One of the more appealing Beaujolais with its pert dry edge. Not typically firmly fruity Beaujolly at all here. Well, well.

Sancerre Rouge Les Belles Dames Vacheron 1997 14.5 £13–20
Can only be compared with Volnay and the Yarra Valley. It has the former's dry vegetality, the latter's Pinot sweetness and cherry brightness. Lot of money for an unlikely marriage.

Sancerre Rouge Vacheron 1998 15.5 £7–10
Uncompromisingly French and take-me-as-I-am attitude here. And many drinkers, New World softies, will find this wine, at ten quid my life, absurdly dry and rocky. But, for some of us sentimentalists, it has distinct charms.

Syrah Collines Rhodaniennes, Co-op de Tain Hermitage 1998 13.5 £5.00

Syrah VdP du Cave Tain l'Hermitage 1998 13 £5.00

Vacqueyras Beaumes-de-Venise 1999 16.5 £5–7
Immensely mouth-filling and chocolate-rich fruit here, of great thickly textured ripeness yet beautifully soft and deftly interwoven tannic tightness. Class act.

MORRISONS RED

Beaujolais NV 13 £5.00

Bouches-du-Rhône Merlot NV 15 £3.50

Château Cadillac Legourgues Bordeaux 1997 15 £5–7
A dryly classic claret of perfect proportions to go with loads of meat dishes.

Château de Candale Haut-Médoc 1996 15 £7–10

Château La Fage Côtes de Bergerac 1997 13.5 £5.00
Very dry and earthy and best suited to rich food.

Château Saint-Galier Graves 1997 14.5 £5.00
Very dry and food-friendly.

Chinon Domaine de Briançon 1997 16 £5.00
What a bargain! Tobacco and wild raspberries with gorgeous tannins, this is a classic Chinon of great wit and warmth, at a terrific price.

Claret Bordeaux NV, Morrisons 13.5 £3.50
Juicy yet dry and smooth. Must be the cheapest drinkable 'claret' on the market.

Falcon Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon, VdP d'Oc 1999 16 £3.50
Brilliant dryness and hugely arresting blackcurrant richness. Fantastic value.

Falcon Ridge Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999 15 £3.50
What a drop of stuff this is: ripe, rich, a touch raucous but £3.50! It's a miracle.

Falcon Ridge Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 £3.50
Joyous fruit here. Lovely tangy richness and plump ripeness.

Fitou NV 13 £5.00

Heritage des Caves des Papes Côtes du Rhône 1998 15.5 £5.00
Plumpish, dry, gently herby, and on the classy side of rustic. Terrific food wine.

La Chasse du Pape Reserve Côtes du Rhône 1998 16 £5.00
It has a country bumpkin temperament allied to a city slicker's intellect. Thus we get great dry rip-roaring herby fruit.

Les Planels Minervois 1997 14 £5.00
Dry but rollingly rich.

'M' Côtes du Rhône NV 13 £3.50
Rustic charm.

'M' Côtes du Roussillon Red NV 13 £3.50
Very sticky and rich.

Minervois Cellier la Chouf NV 13 £3.50

Oak Matured Bordeaux 1997 13 £5.00
Touch dull.

Rhône Valley Red 1998 14 £3.50

Saint-Emilion NV, Morrisons 14 £5–7
Authentic, dry, warm, fruity, very quaffable and hugely casserole-friendly.

Sichel Médoc NV 13 £5–7

Vacqueyras Domaine de Ameleraies 1998 14.5 £5–7

Vin de Pays de l'Hauterive NV 12 £3.50

Winter Hill Red VdP d'Oc 1999 14 £3.50
Bargain bonny fruit.

ODDBINS RED

Abbotts Ammonite Côtes du Roussillon 1999 15 £5.00
A juicy glugging red with a hint of the hot, sweaty Midi sun.

Baron Saint-Pierre, Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 14.5 £3.50

Château de Combebelle Saint-Chinian 1998 (biodynamic) 15.5 £5–7
Rich, juicy undertone to superb herby fruit and tannins.

Château de Valcombe, Costières de Nîmes 1998 17 £5–7
Cheroots, hedgerows, garigues, leather, smoke, tannins, hint of old wood – enough for you?

Château de Valcombe Prestige, Costières de Nîmes 1998 16 £5–7
A touch less grip than the cheaper wine from this property.

Château Depaule, Cabardes 1998 16.5 £5.00
Tobacco, coffee, plums – plus texture and tension between fruit and acidity. Complex and bold.

Château Grand Escalion, Costières de Nîmes 1998 17 £5–7
A lot like Ch de Valcombe except it's more difficult to get your tongue round the name.

Château Lamarche Canon 'Candelaire', Canon-Fronsac 1998 15 £7–10
An accomplished claret with genuine claims to be ranked alongside grands crus – the tannins are certainly in this class.

Château Maris Minervois 1998 (biodynamic) 16 £5–7
So deep and gravely, gravelly savoury it must have rich cheese to go with it. Great tannins here.

Château Ollieux Romanis, Corbières 1998 17 £5–7
Quite delicious in a way a great Médoc can sometimes be: tobaccoey, coffee-edged, beautifully smooth tannins, elongated fruit. Outstanding fruit here.

Château St-Jean de Conques, Saint-Chinian 1998 13 £5.00

Château Vaugelas Cuvée Prestige Corbières 1998 15.5 £5.00
Cherries and plums, ripe and ready, with a smoothly delivered, stylish finish

Comte Cathare Fitou 1998 16 £5–7
The tannins lurk under the surface of the ripe fruit and so we get great smooth texture.

Comte Cathare Le Clot La Clap Coteaux du Languedoc 1999 16.5 £5–7
Very elegant in spite of its insistent tannins and all-embracing fruit

Côte-Rôtie Guigal 1996 17 £20+
The wine rates twelve points –

twenty-four hours after being opened. But if poured into a large jug and allowed to breathe for forty-eight hours a vigorous, beautiful Côte-Rôtie emerges. Odd world, isn't it, that an artefact should require such handling?

Côtes du Rhône, Clos Petite Bellane 1999 16 £5–7
The surge of herby tannins is checked on the finish by lovely rich fruit.

Côtes du Rhône, Domaine d'Andezon 1999 15 £5–7
Terrific tannins and deep warm fruit.

Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998 16 £7–10
Always, incredibly, a consistently rich and svelte performer on the taste buds.

Côtes du Rhône Les Arbousiers, Remejeanne 1997 14 £5–7

Crozes-Hermitage Domaine du Pavillion-Mercurol 1998 15 £7–10
Coal-edged chewy fruit.

Crozes-Hermitage Les Pierrelles, Belle 1996 13 £7–10

Crozes-Hermitage Meysonniers, Chapoutier 1998 15.5 £7–10
Typical Crozes: you either love the charcoal or you loathe it. I'm in the middle somewhere.

Domaine Borie de Maurel Belle de Nuit, Minervois 1999 17.5 £7–10
Spreads itself lavishly on the taste buds and refuses to budge. A bottle might last a week, so lingering is the richly complex, stunningly tannic fruit.

Domaine Borie de Maurel Esprit d'Automne, Minervois 1999 17 £5–7
Lush edge to the cigar-tangy fruit. Very ripe and ready.

Domaine Borie de Maurel Rêve de Carignan, Minervois 1999 14 £5–7
Immensely juicy and ripe.

Domaine de la Vistoule Cabernet Sauvignon, VdP d'Oc 1998 16 £5–7
Gracious! The energy of the wine is superb. And the warmth!

Domaine de la Vistoule Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1998 15.5 £5–7
Juicy, herby, dry and food-friendly.

Domaine de Montine Coteaux du Tricastin 1998 16 £5–7
Terrifically tasty tannins!

Domaine de Saint-Antoine Syrah, Costières de Nîmes 1999 15 £5–7
Chewy, ripe, herby and deliciously dry.

Domaine l'Aigueliere Grenat, VdP du Mont Baudile 1998 16.5 £7–10
Spicy, creamy, a touch tobaccoey, and deliciously soft and fruit crumbly on the finish

Domaine Lafage Cuvée Les Côtes du Roussillon 1998 15 £5–7
A very bright, almost juicy, plummy wine.

Domaine Remaury Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998 17 £5.00
Wonderfully invigorated, soulful, charcoal chewy fruit of immense

depth and richness. The price is absurd given the potency and flavour on offer here

Domaine Saint-Jullien Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 15.5 £5.00

Dourthe No 1 Bordeaux 1998 13 £5–7
Green tannins on the finish. Eaten with raw horse steak, this wine rates 16.

Enclave des Papes Cuvée Spéciale, Côtes du Rhône 1999 16 £5.00
Wonderfully smooth and unruffled fruit with a hint of spiced plum and tobacco. Fantastic value for money.

Grangeneuve Vieilles Vignes Coteaux du Tricastin 1998 17 £5–7
The chewy texture is fraught with deliciousness: tobacco, tea, chocolate, herbs and relaxed tannins.

James Herrick Millia Passum Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1998 16.5 £5–7
Brilliant dark, dusky fruit of concentrated cassis and crunchy tannins.

La Maquis Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 16 £5.00
Stunning concentration of rich fruit and rich savoury tannins. Huge personality and poise.

Le Grand Verdier, Minervois 1998 17 £5–7
Has tannins which grip, fruit which thrills, texture which excites – even the price is delicious.

Les Bories Blanques, Minervois 1998 15 £5.00
Rampant tannicity here.

Les Grandes Vignes, Côtes du Rhône 1999 16 £5–7
Has delicious hedgerow ripeness and a warm, immensely soft texture.

Mas Saint-Vincent Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 16.5 £5.00
A stunningly complete and captivatingly rich masterwork of herbs, earth, hedgerows and passion.

Mosaique Grenache Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999 14 £5.00
Polished rusticity. Charmingly fruity price.

Mosaique Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1999 14 £5.00
Juicy fun drinking.

Pavillion de l'Escalion, Costières de Nîmes 1998 16.5 £5.00
Such warmth and herby richness, allied to sensational tannins, that you can't believe the price tag.

Plan Macassan, Costières de Nîmes 1998 16.5 £5.00
Brilliant wine to take to the restaurant – it can't be affected by cork taint. And the fruit, all action and feisty, deserves preserving – it's terrific!

Ptomaine de Blageurs Syrah, VdP de l'Ardèche 1997 14 £5.00
Amusing pretension to the label, none to the fruit – except for the waggish tannins.

Santenay 1er Cru Les Gravières, Domaine Bourgeot 1998 13 £10–13
I love the tannins but I don't go a bundle on the bitterness of the fruit – not at £13.

SAFEWAY RED

Anciennes Vignes Carignan, VdP de l'Aude 1998 15.5 £5.00
What great tannins here! The perfect steak frites bistro wine.

Baron de Lestac, Bordeaux 1998 15 £5.00
Excellent class here. A real claret. Has depth and decisiveness. No mucking about. It gets straight on with it.

Beaujolais Villages 'Combes aux Jacques' 1998 12 £5-7
Selected stores

Bourgogne Pinot Noir 'Réserve de la Famille' 1996 12 £5-7

Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998, Safeway 16 £5.00
Great bargain. Claret-like tannins meet Italian-style fruit in an earthy clash of pleasure-giving, ripe, fat fruit.

Calvet St-Emilion 1997 13 £5-7

Château Clos de la Chesnaie, Lalande de Pomerol 1998 14 £7-10
Elegant and classy but its tannins make it suitable for serious claret buffs only.
Selected stores

Château de Coulaine, Chinon 1998 (organic) 16 £5-7
Imagine earth cherries and pencil shavings, herbs and good firm tannins. Brilliant, serious, food friendly. 67 stores.

Château de Lausières, Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 15.5 £5.00

Château de Villenouvette, Cuvée Marcel Barsalou Corbières 1998 16 £7-10
So smooth you wonder how the grapes are contained in it – let alone the Midi sun, herbs and deep soil. Very elegant. 70 stores.

Château Grand Champs Bordeaux 1998 13.5 £5-7
Chewy and rich, very unclaret-like (which is in its favour, in several senses).

Château Jouanin Cuvée Prestige, Côtes de Castillon 1998 15 £5-7
Juicy and ripe but with richly engaging, savoury tannins.

Château La Rose Brisson St-Emilion Grand Cru 1998 16 £10-13
Deliciously woody and dry, but this sensation is dispersed by the cassis-edged finish. An impressively cultured and perfectly mature claret.

Château Limonier, Bordeaux 1998 15.5 £5.00
Amazing! True concentrated claret at a knock down price.

Château Liversan, Cru Bourgeois, Haut-Médoc 1997 12 £7-10
Selected stores.

Château Maison Neuve Montagne St-Emilion 1998 15.5 £7-10
Very proper and claret-like in its richest and most attractive way. Gorgeous tannins here, soft and a touch soupy.

Château Montbrun Corbières 1999 16.5 £5.00
Oh yes! The real thing. France uniquely produces great country wines, and this one is a fine, rich, deep, dry, earthy yet full rounded specimen. Fantastic value.

Château Montbrun de Gautherius Corbières 1999 15 £5.00
Spreads swiftly, like a forest fire, and engages the taste buds in a fight to sort out the soft, ripe plums from the earthy tannins

Château Philippe de Vessière, Costières de Nîmes 1997 15.5 £5.00

Château Pourchaud-Larquey, Bordeaux 1998 (organic) 15.5 £5–7
Terrific tannins here. Really biteable and expressive. Selected stores.

Château Rozier, St-Emilion Grand Cru 1996 13 £10–13
I find it too expensive for the fruit on offer. I prefer Safeway's under-a-fiver clarets.

Château Tour du Mont, Haut-Médoc 1998 13.5 £5–7
Has that underlying charcoal tannicity which puts so many Aussie fruit lovers off.

Chevalier de Malle, Graves 1998 14 £7–10
Give it five years. Selected stores.

Claret NV, Safeway 13 £5.00

Corbières 1999, Safeway 14 £3.50
Juicy and very immediate. A great party wine.

Côtes du Rhône 1999, Safeway 14 £3.50
Great-value tippling. Characterful and correct.

Crozes-Hermitage Etienne Barret 1999 14.5 £5–7
Ripe, soft and yielding. Unusually forward for so young a Crozes.

Domaine Chris Limouzi, Corbières 1998 16.5 £5–7
Stunning softness and beautifully textured tobacco and blackberry fruit. Gorgeous wine. France fights back! Selected stores.

Domaine de Contenson Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1998 16 £5.00
Simply hugely quaffable and then some. The fruit is generous and warm.

Domaine des Bruyeres, Côtes de Malepere 1998 16.5 £5.00
What effrontery to be so rich and complex, dry and decisive, for such a small sum of money. It's a lovely wine.

Domaine des Lauriers, Faugères 1997 16.5 £5–7
Thundering fruit collects the tannins as it gallops across the taste buds scattering everything in its path Marvellous quaffing! Quite exceptional. Top 157 stores.

Domaine Montmija, Corbières 1999 (organic) 15.5 £5.00
Brilliant cheery cherry dryness and richness. Has herbs and earth and great food compatibility. Selected stores.

Domaine Vieux Manoir de Maransan Cuvée Spéciale 1998, Safeway 15.5 £5.00

Enclos des Cigales Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1999 14 £3.00
Nice touches of herbs and earth. Selected stores.

Enclos des Cigales Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 £5.00
The label is so elegant you wonder at the price ticket. The fruit? Equal to the label. What a steal for under four quid. Selected stores

Fleurie Domaine des Raclets 1998 13 £7–10

French Révolution Le Rouge 1999 16 £5.00
Hugely different from its white cousin, in that there is real character and effortless fruit here. Great depth, marvellous tannins, firm, rich texture.

Hautes-Côtes de Nuits Cuvée Spéciale 1996 10 £7.10

James Herrick Millia Passum Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1998 16.5 £5–7
Brilliant dark, dusky fruit of concentrated Cassis and crunchy tannins. 70 stores.

Jean Louis Denois Mourvèdre/Grenache, VdP d'Oc 1998 17 £5–7
Stunningly well textured and cultured. Potent fruit of complexity and minor grandeur combined with rich herbs and lovely warm tannins.

L'If Merlot/Carignan, VdP d'Oc 1999 14.5 £5.00
Handsome tannic structure. The fruit is deep and rich.

La Chasse du Pape 'Réserve Barrique' Côtes du Rhône 1999 16.5 £5.00
Lovely warmth and ripeness here. Torrents of flavour. Yet it's stylish and controlled. Terrific value.

La Cuvée Mythique VdP d'Oc 1998 16 £5.7
One of the most elegantly robust Oc reds for a couple of years now. This vintage is urgent and very severely impressive. Selected stores.

La Provincia Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1998 15.5 £5–7
Happy juice from nose to throat. Keen tannins well held by the blackcurrant fruit. 70 stores

La Source Merlot/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999 15 £5.00
Now here the hedgerow sweetness of the fruit is offset by some Midi-warm tannins and a dry, earthy finish.

'Les Tourelles' Cahors 1999 15.5 £5.00
Lush, warm, herby, dry-edged, gorgeously charged with savoury tannins, and a striking finish.

Mercurey Raoul Clerget 1996 12 £7–10

Merlot Vin de Pays d'Oc 1999, Safeway 14 £3.50
A very jammy Merlot.

Minervois 1999, Safeway 14 £3.50
Sheer love juice.

Mont Tauch Merlot, Barrel Matured, VdP du Torgan 1998 17 £7–10
Superb tobacco undertones to the leather and plummy spiciness. The Pétrus of the Midi? Extraordinarily complex and beautifully textured richness. Selected stores

Moulin de Ciffre Faugères 1998 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous dusky, chewy fruit of flavour, depth and stature. Power, elegance, personality – it's impressive stuff.

No 2 Château Lafon-Rochet, St-Estephe 1996 14.5 £13–20
Selected stores.

Oak-aged Côtes du Rhône 1999, Safeway 13.5 –£5.00
Very dry.

Organic French Red VdP du Gard 1999, Safeway 13 –£5.00
Chewy plums and raspberries. Don't like the aroma much but the fruit is respectably clothed.

Pinot Noir d'Autrefois VdP d'Oc 1999 13 –£5.00
Quite what these other times, or olden times, were like it is difficult to say, but Burgundians won't quake in their nostalgic clogs.

Pommard Premier Cru Le Clos Blanc 1997 11 £13–20
Simply appalling price for such simpering simplicity.

Pommard Premier Cru Les Arvelets 1996 12 £13–20
Good pong, lousy juicy finish. Yields of grapes far too high.

Réserve Valseque VdP de l'Aude 1999 14 –£3.50
Thin, touch ascetic, but firmly stoic in the face of this deprivation to become wirily fruity on the finish. Very pleasant chilled.

Savigny du Domaine du Château de Meursault 1996 11 £7–10

Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999, Safeway 15 –£3.50
Fantastic value for such deliciously juicy richness and tannic balance. Forward and very modern.

Valreas Cuvée Prestige, Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1999 16 –£5.00
Very thick and blackcurranty with hints of plum and raspberry and a touch of fig. A terrifically rich texture and ripe, savoury tannins.

Young Vatted Grenache VdP de l'Ardèche 1999 15 –£3.50
Superbly active plum and strawberry fruit, fine-grained tannins and a flourish on the finish. Great chilled with fish.

Young Vatted Syrah VdP de Vaucluse 1999, Safeway 15 –£5.00
A very plump rich red with depths which few wines at this price plumb.

SAINSBURY'S RED

Beaujolais NV, Sainsbury's 13.5 –£5.00

Beaujolais Villages Les Roches Grillées 1999 12 £5–7
Falls a bit short of what I look for in a £5.50 wine. Most stores

Bordeaux Rouge, Sainsbury's 13 –£3.50

Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's 15.5 –£3.50
Meaty with warm tannins, a vegetal undertone and very smooth exterior. The wine's interior, and it isn't shallow, is soft blackcurrant fruit.

Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's (3-litre box) 14.5 £3–£3.50
Like a claret (old-style) in its very dry peppery grouchiness. Needs food. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Château Beaumont Cru Bourgeois, Haut-Médoc 1995 15 £13–20

Château Clement-Pichon, Haut-Médoc 1995 13 £10–13

Château Coufran Cru Bourgeois, Haut Medoc 1996 13 £10–13

Château de la Grande Gandiole Châteauneuf-du-Pape 1997 16.5 £10–13
Rolling fruit which unfurls like a complex carpet of tufted fruits and dry, woody richness. Lovely toe-tingling finish. 100 selected stores.

Château de la Tour Bordeaux Rouge 1998 14 £5–7
Quite a bouncy claret as these things go. And down the throat it goes very prettily. Selected stores.

Château Haut Bergey, Pessac-Léognan 1995 14 £10–13

Château Haut de la Pierriere Côtes de Castillon 1998 16 £5–7
Marvellous little claret of substance and warmth. Lovely gripping tannins and chocolate and Cassis fruit. Most stores.

Château Memoires, Bordeaux Rouge 1996 14 £5–7

Château Semeillan 14 £13–20

Mazeau Cru Bourgeois, Listrac 1996

Château Tassin Premières Côtes de Bordeaux 1999 15 £3–£5.00
A very dry but very convincing claret of lingering tannicity and subtle lushness. At most stores.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Château de la Grande Gardiole 1998 17 £10–13
Expensive but mountainous. Intense richness and herby hauteur. Selected stores.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Domaine Michel Bernard 1997 15.5 £10–13
A massively dry, tannic Rhône red which grips the molars in a very austere vice. A brilliant food wine – rare meat is bred for it. Selected stores.

Chinon Domaine de Colombier 1999 16.5 £5–£5.00
Best vintage for some years of this terrific Cabernet Franc. Has ripe cherries, slatey tannins and a lovely bitter cherry/cobnut finish. Utterly delicious. Selected stores.

Claret Cuvée Prestige NV, Sainsbury's 14 £3–£5.00
Oddly rich and firm but the typical claret tannins get going after a few seconds to prove themselves savoury and tasty. Most stores.

Claret, Sainsbury's 14.5 £3–£5.00

Classic Selection Brouilly 1997, Sainsbury's 14 £5–7

Classic Selection Châteauneuf-du-Pape 1998, Sainsbury's 15 £7–10
Most individual and walnutty rich and

softly savoury. Has a modern feel to it. Finishes like an exotic gravy. Most stores.

Classic Selection St-Emilion 1996, Sainsbury's 14 £7–10
A gutsy St-Em which really suits meat dishes – it isn't for quaffing.

Clos Magne Figeac, St-Emilion 1997 16 £7–10
Class act. Real Merlot magic here along with deep, savoury tannins. A terrific claret of style and substance. 195 stores

Clos René, Pomerol 1994 16.5 £20+
If one must spend £25 on a claret, this is worth every penny. It drips with developed tannins, has huge complexity of fruit, will age for seven or eight years and it's all roaring now. 18 selected stores.

Côtes du Rhône NV, Sainsbury's 13.5 –£3.50
Very dry and party spirited. Good chilled with grilled fish.

Crozes-Hermitage Petite Ruche 1997 15.5 £7–10
Classic Crozes – has that extraordinary coal/charcoal edge to the rich fruit. Dry yet beautifully fruity. Selected stores.

Cuvée Prestige Côtes du Rhône 1998, Sainsbury's 15 –£5.00
Full, dry, rich and handsomely textured and concentrated.

French Révolution Le Rouge 1999 16 £5.00
Hugely different from its white cousin, in that there is real character and effortless fruit here. Great depth, marvellous tannins, firm, rich texture.

Hautes-Côtes de Nuits 1998 12 £7–10
Selected stores.

Hautes-Côtes de Nuits Dames Huguettes 1998 13.5 £7–10
Has some very good points. All thirteen and a half of them. 195 stores

Jacques Frelin Organic Crozes-Hermitage 1998 13 £7–10
Has the aroma of stale sausages
50 stores

La Chasse du Pape Côtes du Rhône 1998 16.5 –£5.00
Stunning ripeness and big earthy, rich plum/blackcurrant dryness and urgency. Lovely tannins. Great texture. Selected stores.

La Demoiselle de Sociando Mallet, Haut-Médoc 1996 16 £13–20

LPA Côtes de St-Mont 1997 14.5 –£5.00
Like a minor juicy-but-dry claret. Terrific with undercooked meats. Selected stores.

Marsannay Domaine Bertagna 1998 15 £7–10
Delicious. dry, cherry-edged, good tannins, warm fruit with a hint of truffle (subtle hint it's true, but at least it's a real Pinot phenomenon). 130 stores

Mercurey Clos la Marche 1997 13 £13–20
100 stores.

Merlot VdP d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's (1.5 litre) 15.5 £5–7
The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Merlot VdP de la Cité de Carcassonne, Caroline de Beaulieu 1999 16.5 – £5.00
Spicy baked fruit aroma leads to some stunning herby hedgerow fruited richness. Has a refined rusticity of great, dry charm. Most stores.

Minervois, Sainsbury's 15 £3.50

Old Git Grenache Syrah 1999 15.5 – £5.00
Great fun. I'm bound to love the name and the dry, Midi fruit. Most stores.

Red Burgundy NV, Sainsbury's 12 £5–7

Santenay, Château de Mercey 1996 12 £10–13
Selected stores.

Stowells Claret NV (3-litre box) 10 – £5.00
The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Stowells of Chelsea Merlot VdP d'Oc (3-litre box) 15 – £3.50
A dry, subtly leathery wine with a hint of earthiness and herbs on the finish. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Syrah VdP d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's 15 – £3.50
Soft, hugely gluggable, very light, gentle tannins and subtle spicing.

Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic) 16.5 £5–7
Wonderful energy and strikingly stylish tannins here. Offers hedgerow fruit, herbs, a soft earthiness, and brilliant tannins as it glides effortlessly home. Most stores.

Vieux Château Landon, Médoc 1996 13 £7.10

Vin de Pays de l'Aude Rouge, Sainsbury's 16 – £3.50
Tremendous richness and savoury depth here. Hint of leather, hedgerow fruit, tannin. Fantastic. Selected stores.

Vin de Pays des Bouches-du-Rhône NV, Sainsbury's 14.5 – £3.50

Vin Rouge de France NV, Sainsbury's (3-litre box) 13 – £3.50
Rough a touch, but it's only a touch and it does offer some character. Needs food to spark into life. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Vougeot Domaine Bertagna 1995 13 £13.20

SOMERFIELD RED

Buzet Cuvée 44 1997 15 – £5.00
Good stuff! And stuffed with generous tannins and savoury fruit.

Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield 14 – £3.50
Real blackcurrant and pepper – but very soft and thick.

Château Blanca, Bordeaux 1999 15.5 – £5.00
A stunning claret for the money. Thick as an Aussie, spicy as a Spaniard. The future of Bordeaux?

Château Cazal Cuvée des Fées Vieilles Vignes, St-Chinian 1998 16 £5–7
A 100% Syrah of hugely rich and hedgerow-fruited opulence. It spreads

itself slowly and lovingly over the taste buds. Selected stores.

Château Plaisance, Montagne St-Emilion 1996 15.5 £5–7

Château Valoussière Coteaux du Languedoc 1997 16.5 –£5.00
Gorgeous spices and tannins, fruit and acids. A really stylish character here of depth and deliciousness. Beautifully ruffled texture.

Château Verdignan Haut-Médoc 1996 13.5 £10–12
Far too expensive for the level of excitement. It's fruity and sveltely tannic but so are several Somerfield wines at a third of the price. Selected stores.

Claret NV, Somerfield 13.5 –£3.50
Claret as real juice of the vine: no earth, no stalks, no green leaves

Corbières Rouge Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield 15 –£3.50
Superb texture and tension between spicy plums, tannins (savoury) and subtle acids. What a bargain!

Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1999, Somerfield 14 –£5.00
Lovely hedgerow sweetness offset by earthy tannins.

Côtes du Roussillon Rouge 1998, Somerfield 15 –£3.50
A bountiful bargain. Not a barrel of laughs, but a stainless-steel tankful of ripe rich smiles.

Crozes-Hermitage 1998 14.5 –£5.00
It's the lovely touch of charcoal to the dark cherries I like so much

Domaine de Bisconte Côtes du Roussillon 1998 15 –£5.00
A blend of Grenache Noir, Carignan, Syrah and Mourvèdre which is ripe, forward and hugely food-friendly.

Domaine de Courtilles Côte 125 Corbières 1998 15.5 £5–7

Domaine Haut-St-Georges Corbières 1998 16 –£5.00
Almost sweet but the oak holds it back and the blackberries hold the fruit and the fruit is held by the tannins. An all-embracing wine.

Domaine la Tuque Bel Air, Côtes de Castillon 1997 14 £5–7

Fitou Rocher d'Ambrée 1998, Somerfield 14.5 –£5.00
Sticky tar tannins make it a real mouthful.

Goûts et Couleurs Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998 16 –£5.00
Delicious Cabernet of great style and purposeful fruitiness. It's lavish on the finish.

Goûts et Couleurs Syrah Mourvèdre VdP d'Oc 1999 16 –£5.00
Real class here: personality, wit, warmth, depth, texture, balanced elements and complexity.

Hautes-Côtes de Beaune Rouge, G. Desiré 1999 12 £5–7
Simplistic.

James Herrick Cuvée Simone VdP d'Oc 1998 16.5 –£5.00
An intensely sophisticated and chic bottle of fruit which accompanies a good book or a complex CD like a dream. Subtle yet tenacious.

Médoc NV, Somerfield 13 £5.00
Bit too juicy to rate higher. Selected stores.

Oak Aged Claret NV, Somerfield 15 £5.00
Great style and texture. A really charming claret.

Red Burgundy 1997, Somerfield 12 £5–7
Too sweet.

Vacqueyras Côtes du Rhône 1999 15.5 £5.00
Warm, soupy, rich, clinging and urgent-to-please.

Vacqueyras Domaine de la Soleiade 1998 15 £5.00
Unusually forward for a Vacqueyras so young. Hugely drinkable and open-hearted.

VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardèche Rouge 1999, Somerfield 14 £3.50
Dry, hint of rustic sod, barbecue wine.

VdP des Côtes de Gascogne Rouge 1998, Somerfield 15 £3.50
A great little warm-hearted party wine.

Winter Hill Rouge, VdP de l'Aude 1999 14 £3.50
Very correct and stiff-upper-lippish. Dry, civilised, accomplished.

SPAR RED

Brouilly Les Celliers de Bellevue 1998 12 £5–7
Too pricey.

Claret NV, Spar 15 £5.00
Terrific stuff. Really deliciously firm, savoury tannins and integrated blackcurrant fruit. A bargain claret, authentic and food friendly.

Cordier Château Le Cadet de Martinens, Margaux 1995 15.5 £7–10
A solid claret, perhaps the woodiness showing over the fruit, but the texture is excellent and the typical blackcurrant fruit is elegant and free-flowing. Outstanding tannins make an impact on the finish. Overall, a festive food wine – especially meat dishes.

Coteaux du Languedoc NV 13 £3.50

Côtes du Ventoux Le Rossignol, Spar 1998 15.5 £5.00
The best cheap red at Spar: rich, balanced, characterful, good balance of fruit, alcohol and tannins. A terrific, genuine, highly quaffable, very dry country wine.

Fitou NV, Spar 16 £5.00
Touch of tar, tobacco, coffee, then blackcurrants, herbs and earth. A wonderful rustic mouthful.

French Country VdP de l'Herault NV, Spar (1 litre) 13 £3.50
Has some interesting earthy presence but doesn't finish tellingly. Price band reflects the 75cl equivalent.

Gevrey-Chambertin Les Caves des Hautes-Côtes 1994 12 £13–20

Hautes-Côtes de Beaune 1995, Spar 10 £5–7
All that's left on the bones is a shred of tannin.

La Côte Syrah Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar 15.5 £5.00
Lovely smooth ripe fruit, handsomely

textured and warm and with a delicious thwack of intense richness on the finish.

Lussac St-Emilion 1997 11 £5–7

Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar 15.5 £5.00
Aromatic, feisty, very dry, terrific herbs and Midi sunshine - they all impact very agreeably. Terrific price for such a performance.

Salaison Shiraz/Cabernet VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar 15.5 £5.00
Gripping tannins to some smoky, rich, savoury fruit. Very dry to finish, but this is an attribute – it means food will be enhanced in flavour and pleasure.

Vin de Pays de l'Aude NV, Spar 12 £3.50
Real rusticity playacting at being smooth and plump.

TESCO RED

Beaujolais NV, Tesco 11 £3.50

Beaujolais-Villages 1999, Tesco 12 £5.00
Dullsville personified. Not at all stores.

Burgundy Pinot Noir 1998, Tesco 13.5 £5–7
Almost, almost . . .

Buzet Cuvée 44 1997 15 £5.00
Good stuff! And stuffed with generous tannins and savoury fruit.

Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc NV, Tesco 14 £3.50
Lovely dry touches of hedgerow fruitiness which is not remotely rough though it is charmingly rustic.

Chartron la Fleur Château La Grave Bordeaux 1997 13 £5.00

Château Clement Pichon, Cru Bourgeois Haut-Médoc 1996 13 £13–20

Château de Côte de Montpezat, Côtes de Castillon 1997 15.5 £5–7
One of my favourite Tesco clarets because it has efficient fruit, sufficient tannins, and a great warmth of texture holding it all together. An excellent claret for not a lot of money.

Château de Goelane Bordeaux Supérieur 1997 13 £5–7
Soft and lissom, lacks a punchy finish.

Château Ginestière Côteaux du Languedoc 1997 15.5 £5.00

Château Haut-Chaigneau Lalande de Pomerol 1996 14 £13–20

Château la Fleur Bellevue Premières Côtes de Blaye 1998 14 £5–7
Softly spoken, politely tannic, firmly fruity. Charming friend to roast lamb with garlic and herbs.

Château La Raze Beauvalet Haut-Médoc 1997 14 £5–7

Château la Tour de Mons Bordeaux 1996 13.5 £13–20

Château Lafarque Pessac-Léognan 1996 12 £13–20

Château Liliane-Ladouys Cru Bourgeois Supérieur Saint-Estephe 1996 12 £13–20

Château Maucaillou, Cru Bourgeois Moulis en Médoc 1996 12 £20+

Château Maurel Fonsalade, St-Chinian 1997 14.5 £5.00

Château Tour de l'Espérance Bordeaux Supérieur 1997 16 £5.00
Classic claret at an astonishing price. Has smoky richness, developed charcoal tannin, and the fruit, brave and battling, shines through. Top 200 stores.

Claret, Tesco 12.5 £3.50

Clarity Bordeaux Rouge 1998 14 £5.00
Has some bite to it Great meat dish companion.

Corbières NV, Tesco 13.5 £3.50
Dry with a paradoxical juicy mesh of fruit on the finish.

Corbiéres Réserve La Sansoure 1999, Tesco 15 £5.00
Soft, very ripe fruit. Very drinkable and very good value.

Côte-Rôtie Guigal 1996 17 £20+
The wine rates twelve points twenty-four hours after being opened. But if poured into a large jug and allowed to breathe for forty-eight hours a vigorous, beautuful Côte-Rôtie emerges. Odd world, isn't it, that an artefact should require such handling?

Côtes du Rhône NV, Tesco 13.5 £3.50

Côtes du Rhône-Villages Domaine de la Grande Retour 1999, Tesco 14 £5.00
I go for the herbs mostly. And the hint of soil.

Dark Horse Barrique Aged Cahors 1998 14 £5.00

Domaine du Soleil Syrah/Malbec VdP d'Oc NV 14.5 £5.00

Fitou NV, Tesco 14.5 £3.50
Has charm and character and the cherry-rich fruit controls its jammy side as well as subsuming the earthy tannins

Fitou Réserve Baron de la Tour NV, Tesco 15.5 £5.00
A lovely rusticity controlled by its smooth, urbane manners.

French Grenache Prestige, Tesco 14.5 £5.00

French Grenache, Tesco 14 £3.50

French Merlot VdP d'Oc NV, Tesco 14.5 £3.50
A deliciously meaty party wine. Has loads of flavour and finishes with some gutsy fruit.

Gamay, Tesco 10 £3.50

Gevrey-Chambertin 1997 12 £13–20
Top 85 stores. Also available in 1.5 litre bottle.

Goûts et Couleurs Premium Cuvée Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998 16 £5.00
Hums with dry, impressively compacted blackcurrant fruit. Very elegant tannins here. Very deeply laid fruit of textured class. Most stores

Graves 1996, Tesco 14 £7–10
Very correct and subtly posh. Real

claret, so it costs, but it isn't too austere or ill-mannered

Les Etoiles French Organic Red Wine NV 13 £5.00

Louis Jadot Combe aux Jacques Beaujolais Villages 1998 13 £5–7
Grrr . . .

Margaux 1997, Tesco 12 £7–10
I can't see, clearly, why £10 is a sane price for this wine unless one makes the excuse that the makers insist on a luxurious lifestyle (where they drink Californian Cabernets). Perhaps on these grounds Tesco found this a candidate for its 'Tesco Finest' range.

Médoc 1997, Tesco 13 £5.00
Odd ripeness which lingers ahead of the tannins

Minervois NV, Tesco 14 £3.50
Very blackcurrant jammy with a hint of herbs and earth. Great food/party wine.

Nuits-St-Georges, Les Chezeaux 1996 13 £13–20

Oak Aged Red Burgundy 1998, Tesco 13.5 £5–7
Amazing presumption and close to being very likeable

Oaked Côtes du Rhône NV 13.5 £5.00

Pommard 1er Cru, Clos des Verger 1996 13.5 £13–20

Rasteau Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1998 16.5 £5.00
One of my favourite villages in the Rhône (anywhere in the world, I daresay) so can I be objective? Hopefully. The wine is drenched in herbs of subtlety yet rich incisiveness, and the fruit is bold, textured and fully charged from nose to throat. Not at all stores.

St-Emilion 1997, Tesco 12.5 £7–10
Most stores.

Syrah VdP d'Oc, Tesco 13.5 £3.50

Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic) 16.5 £5–7
Wonderful energy and strikingly stylish tannins here. Offers hedgerow fruit, herbs, a soft earthiness, and brilliant tannins as it glides effortlessly home.

Yvecourt Claret Bordeaux 1998 12 £5.00
Claret? Bordeaux? On the same label? The fruit, alack, has no such double emphasis.

THRESHER RED

Abbotts Cumulus Minervois 1998 16.5 £5–7
The tannins are hugely gripping and classy but what leaves the most delicious sensory impression are the cheroot edged blackberries.

Beaujolais AC Regional Classics 1997 13.5 £5.00

Beaujolais-Villages Duboeuf 1997 13 £5–7

Château Sauvage Premier Côtes de Bordeaux 1997 13 £5–7
Bit on the costive side.

Château Suau, 1er Côtes de Bordeaux 1997 (unoaked) 13.5 £5–7

Claret Regional Classic, Sichel NV 14 £5.00

Côtes de Beaune-Villages 1996 12 £7–10
Good tannins here. Must be the vintage of the millennium. Not at Wine Rack.

Côtes du Rhône-Villages Les Faisans 1998 14 ~£5.00

Dark Horse Cahors 1998 14 ~£5.00
Hints of rusticity well controlled – perhaps too well – but the tannins go down fighting.

Domaine Peyrat Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15 £5–7
An outstandingly jammy and fresh d'Oc Cab with the earthiness subsumed under the sweetness. The tannins arrive late, and welcomingly.

Fitou Terroir de Tuchan 1998 17 £7–10
Nine quid for a Fitou? When it's as rich, thick, beautifully balanced as this, yes. Yes a thousand times. It compares with northern Rhône and Aussie Shirazes costing a great deal more. It has great style and riveting fruitiness.

Fleurie Georges Duboeuf 1998 11 £7–10

Fleurie Regional Classics 1998 13.5 £5–7

French Révolution Le Rouge 1999 16 ~£5.00
Hugely different from its white cousin, in that there is real character and effortless fruit here. Great depth, marvellous tannins, firm, rich texture.

La Ramillade Côtes du Rhône Rasteau 1997 16 £7–10
Gorgeous tobacco-scented, savoury-rich fruit with lovely curves to the tannins. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Morgon Domaine des Côtes de Douby 1998 13.5 £5–7

Old Bush Vines Carignan 1998 13.5 ~£5.00
Juicy and ripe.

Pinot Noir, Louis Jadot 1998 12.5 £2–10
Dull for the money. Not responsive to the palate's needs.

Sirius Red 1997 13.5 £5–7
Tannic. Needs a casserole of dead things.

UNWINS RED

Ash Ridge Grenache/Merlot 1998 12 ~£5.00

Ash Ridge Syrah d'Oc 1998 13 ~£5.00

Chapelle St-Marie Syrah 1998 16.5 ~£5.00
Superb savoury tannins allied to marvellous earthy fruit, a thin price tag and thick tannins.

Chassagne-Montrachet Louis Jadot 1994 11 £13–20

Château Astruc Minervois 1998 14.5 ~£5.00

Château Beychevelle St-Julien 4eme Cru 1995 12 £20+

Château de Cazeneuve Le Roc de Mates Pic St-Loup 1997 15 £7–10
Drier than its cheaper cousin and with a raspberry edge.

Château de Cazeneuve Les Terres Rouges Pic St-Loup 1997 15.5 £5–7

Delicious tobacco-edged fruit and jammy tannins.

Château Giscours Margaux 3eme Cru 1995 11 £20+

Château Trignon Côtes du Rhône-Villages Sablet Ramillades 1998 17.5 £5–7
Absolutely compelling richness and beautifully earthy tannins. The quintessence of elegant rusticity. Marvellous stuff! From nose to throat it's terrific, taut, tenacious.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Louis Mousset 1998 13.5 £10–13
The fruit struggles to keep pace with the tannins

Côte-Rôtie Guigal 1996 17 £20+
The wine rates twelve points – twenty-four hours after being opened. But if poured into a large jug and allowed to breathe for forty-eight hours a vigorous, beautiful Côte-Rôtie emerges. Odd world, isn't it, that an artefact should require such handling?

Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998 16 £7–10
Always, incredibly, a consistently rich and svelte performer on the taste buds.

Domaine de l'Arneillaud Cairanne Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1999 18 £5–7
Magnificent herby potency and extremely deep elegance here. Has world-class tannins and intense richness

Domaine de la Grand Bellane, Valreas 1997 16 £5–7
Ragged yet dainty on its feet, this richly finishing, very dry wine combines a fair spread of hedgerow fruit and delicious tannin. It is classic Rhône-Villages red. Great drunk out of a Viking horn or sipped with *lièvre à la royale*.

Domaine de la Soleiade, Vacqueyras 1998 15 £5–7
Unusually forward for a Vacqueyras so young. Hugely drinkable and open-hearted.

Fitou Château de Segure 1998 15.5 £5–7
Lovely, Midi-made fruit: herby, earthy, tannic, terrific.

Gigondas Domaine des Amandiers 1998 14 £7–10
Uncommonly juicy. The tannins arrive late

Hautes-Côtes de Beaune 1997 10 £7–10
Sweet nothing

James Herrick Cuvée Simone VdP d'Oc 1998 16.5 £5.00
An intensely sophisticated and chic bottle of fruit which accompanies a good book or a complex CD like a dream. Subtle yet tenacious

La Cigalière Côtes du Rhône 1998 15 £5.00

Les Beaux Sites Domaine de Castan Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5.00

Madiran Château de Crouseilles 1993 14 £7–10

Mauregard Château La Grave Bordeaux 1999 13.5 £5.00
Bit austere. But I love the tannins. The best use of these lovely tannins would be to use them to blend with a juicy Rosemount Aussie red. You might get a 16.5-point wine then.

Saumur Domaine de la Sicardière 1997 15.5 £7.00
Superb dry cherry/raspberry fruit, clean and fresh with a hint of earth, plus great texture, soft and delicious. Hugely friendly, subtle tannins.

St-Emilion 1998 13 £5–7
Good tannins though the fruit gets lost as it opens up

Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic) 16.5 £5–7
Wonderful energy and strikingly stylish tannins here. Offers hedgerow fruit, herbs, a soft earthiness, and brilliant tannins as it glides effortlessly home.

Wild Pig Barrel Reserve Shiraz 1998 14 £5.00
Juice and tannins. Not a traditional recipe.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Abbotts Cumulus Minervois 1998 16.5 £5–7
The tannins are hugely gripping and classy but what leaves the most delicious sensory impression are the cheroot-edged blackberries.

Château Sauvage Premier Côtes de Bordeaux 1997 13 £5–7
Bit on the costive side.

Château Suau, 1er Côtes de Bordeaux 1997 (unoaked) 13.5 £5–7

Cornas Les Nobles Rives, Côtes de Tain 1994 14 £10–13

Côte-Rôtie, Domaine de Bonserine 1996 16 £20+

Côtes de Beaune-Villages 1996 12 £7–10

Côtes du Rhône-Villages Les Faisans 1998 14 £5.00

Dark Horse Cahors 1998 14 £5.00
Hints of rusticity well controlled perhaps too well – but the tannins go down fighting.

Domaine Peyrat Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15 £5–7
An outstandingly jammy and fresh d'Oc Cab with the earthiness subsumed under the sweetness. The tannins arrive late, and welcomingly.

Fitou Special Reserve 1997 14.5 £5.00

Fitou Terroir de Tuchan 1998 17 £7–10
Nine quid for a Fitou? When it's as rich, thick, beautifully balanced as this, yes. Yes a thousand times. It compares with northern Rhône and Aussie Shirazes costing a great deal more. It has great style and riveting fruitiness.

Fleurie Georges Duboeuf 1998 11 £7–10

Fleurie Regional Classics 1998 13.5 £5–7

French Révolution Le Rouge 1999 16 £5.00
Hugely different from its white cousin, in that there is real character and effortless fruit here. Great depth, marvellous tannins, firm, rich texture.

Grenache VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardèche 1997 14.5 £3.50

Mont Tauch Old Bush Vines Carignan 1998 13 £5.00

Morgon Domaine des Côtes de Douby 1998 13.5 £5–7
Good tannins here. Must be the vintage of the millennium.

Old Bush Vines Carignan 1998 13.5 –£5.00
Juicy and ripe.

Pinot Noir, Louis Jadot 1998 12.5 £7–10
Dull for the money. Not responsive to the palate's needs.

Red Burgundy Vergy 1997 12 £5.00

Sirius Red 1997 13.5 £5–7
Tannic Needs a casserole of dead things

WAITROSE RED

Abbotts Ammonite Côtes du Roussillon 1999 15 –£5.00
A juicy glugging red with a hint of the hot, sweaty Midi sun.

Beaujolais Villages 1998 12 £5–7

Bistro Rouge VdP d'Oc 1999 13.5 £5.00

Boulder Creek Red VdP du Vaucluse 1999 13 £3.50
A superb party wine, pasta plonk, posh nosh bottle and altogether properly fruited glugging specimen.

Cabernet Sauvignon La Cité VdP d'Oc 1998 13.5 £5.00
Delicious plum/blackcurrant fruit, hint of spice, controlled tannins. Bargain price.

Cahors Côtes d'Olt 1999 14 £5.00

Château Cazal-Viel, 16 £5.7

Cuvée des Fées St-Chinian 1998
Terrific character and class here. Lingering finish of oomph and aplomb

Château de Caraguilhes Corbières 1998 (half-bottle) (organic) 16 –£5.00
Brigitte's wine is organic, vegan-friendly, rich, earthy, characterful, subtly spicy, very mellow, deep and delicious. It has, furthermore, more delicacy than its tannins suggest – so don't pair it with overly spicy food.

Château de Targe 'Les Tuffes' Saumur-Champigny 1997 13.5 £5–7
Delicious spicy cherries here, quite remarkably calm and cool in the face of the tannins

Château Falfas Côtes de Bourg 1997 14 £7–10
Oddly juicy.

Château Haut d'Allard Côtes de Bourg 1997 15 £5–7
Character and bite. Satisfying claret of some class here.

Château Haut Nouchet Pessac-Léognan 1996 (organic) 13 £10–13

Château Léoville-Las-Cases 2eme Cru Classé, St-Julien 1994 16 £20+
Superb tannins and ripe, soft structured texture. Only from Waitrose Direct

Château Les Tuileries Bordeaux Superieur 1998 13.5 –£5.00

Château Meynard Bordeaux 1998 14.5 £5.00

Lovely dry tannic tension. Great value claret.

Château Palmer 3eme Cru Classé Margaux 1990 12 £20+
Absurd price even if the tannins are great. The fruit is soapy. Only from Waitrose Direct

Château Pech-Latt, Corbières 1998 15 £5.00
Very dry and food-friendly organic fruit. A great casserole bottle.

Château Saint-Maurice Côtes du Rhône 1998 15 £5.00
Old fashioned hints yet finally smooth and charming

Château Tayac Cru Bourgeois, Margaux 1995 13 £13–20
Waitrose's Special Reserve Claret is miles sprauncier.

Clos de Tart Grand Cru Mommessin 1993 15 £20+
Delicious truffley richness and dry finishing aplomb. Only from Waitrose Direct.

Cornas Chapoutier 1997 13 £13–20

Côte-Rôtie Les Jumelles 1997 13 £20+
Only from Waitrose Direct.

Côtes du Rhône 1999, Waitrose 13 £5.00

Côtes du Rhône-Villages, Domaine de Cantemerle 1998 14 £5.00

Côtes du Ventoux 1998 14 £5.00
Nice tight tannins.

Crozes-Hermitage Cave des Clairmonts 1998 14 £5–7

Crozes-Hermitage Domaine de Thalabert 1997 13 £10–13
Only from Waitrose Direct.

Cuvée André St-Estephe 1996 14.5 £13–20
Delicious, if rather pricey. Not at all stores.

Cuvée Eugenie Château Capendu, Corbières 1998 15 £7–10
Very accomplished yet very pricey.

Domaine de Courtille Corbières 1998 16 £7–10
Nine quid for a Corbières? Why not? Especially when it's raunchier than many a £20 claret or £15 Rhône red.

Domaine de Rose Syrah/Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1998 16 £3.50
Fantastic bargain. Full of hints of the Midi sun, herbs and landscape. A colourful, rich yet far from rustic wine.

Domaine du Moulin 'The Cabernets', VdP d'Oc 1998 13 £5.00

Fleurie Montreynaud 1999 12 £7–10
Falls a bit flat.

Gallerie Tempranillo/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998 15.5 £5.00

Good Ordinary Claret Bordeaux, Waitrose 14 £5.00

Hautes-Côtes de Nuits 1998 11 £5–7

L'Enclos Domecque Mourvèdre/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998 14 £5.00
Rustic and unrefined. Great with goulash.

La Bernardine Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Chapoutier 1997 14 £13–20

La Colombe Côtes du Rhône 1999 (organic) 14 £5.00
Juicy with a very savoury undertone.

Les Fontanelles Merlot/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998 15.5 £5.00

Maury, Les Vignerons du Val d'Orbieu NV 16 £5.00
A sweet red wine for chocolate-based puddings. Did I say sweet? It hardly does this complex wine justice.

Merchants Bay Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 13.5 £5.00

Mercurey Rouge 1er Cru 'Les Puillets', Château Le Hardi 1998 13 £10–13
Interesting ragged tannins – most untypical in a Mercurey.

Oaked Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999 14 £5.00
Good sold organic fruit well organised around tight, herby tannins.

Organic Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999 13 £5.00

Prieurs de Foncaire, Buzet Grande Réserve 1998 15.5 £5.00
Very smooth and ripe. Better than many a claret at three times the price.

Saint-Roche VdP du Gard 1999 (organic) 13.5 £5.00
Juicy – hint of character on the finish.

Saint-Joseph, Cave de Saint-Desiderat, Cuvée Medaille d'Or 1997 15.5 £7–10
Terrific dryness and stalky, almost vegetal richness. A better vintage than previous ones, this. More engaging, quirkier, more wallop with the tannins

Santenay Bouchard Père 1997 10 £10–13

Saumur Rouge Les Nivières 1998 14 £5.00
Light, dry, cherry-bright.

Savigny-lès-Beaune Bouchard Père 1998 11 £10–13

Special Reserve Claret, Côtes de Castillon Limited Edition Millennium Magnum 1996 (magnum) 16 £5.00
Bargain claret in a big sexy bottle – the fruit is subtly sensual too and wears a thick, winter coat of nicely knitted tannins. Price bracket shows the 75cl equivalent.

St-Emilion Yvon Mau NV 13 £5–7
Jolie laide.

Valreas Côtes du Rhône Chapoutier (half-bottle) 16.5 £3.50
Superbly well-textured wine of gentility yet passion. It is immensely smooth, richly aromatic (violets and liquorice) and the class is manifest. A lovely half-bottle treat.

Volnay 1er Cru Les Chevret 1996 13 £20+
Only from Waitrose Direct.

Volnay 1er Cru les Caillerets, Clos des 60 Ouvrées, Domaine de la Passe d'Or 1996 14 £20+
Classic? Almost. Only from Waitrose Direct.

WINE CELLAR RED

Abbotts Cumulus Shiraz Minervois 1998 16.5 £5–7
The tannins are hugely gripping and classy but what leaves the most delicious sensory impression are the cheroot-edged blackberries

Big Frank's Cabernet Frank 1998 14 £5–7
Very warm and accommodating. Thickly knitted, soft, very gently spicy and deeply approachable – like Frank the man.

Château Agnel Minervois ' 1998 16 £5.00
Very jammy but it isn't soppy with it. It has very soft yet alert tannins allied to delicious sweet hedgerow fruit.

Château Bonhomme Minervois 1997 13 £5–7
Nice tobacco bouquet but goes all simple and simpering as the fruit surfaces.

Château Côtes de Bellevue, Côtes de Bourg 1996 13.5 £5–7

Château Grand Berthaud, Premières Côtes de Blaye 1997 16 £5–7
Dry yet full of good fruit. Has a tang of the cigar box to it as it finishes, romping home with aplomb. Sheer aplomb in your mouth indeed

Château La Chapelle, St-Chinian 1998 14 £5.00
Juicy with hints of pine and earth.

Château Lamargue Costières de Nîmes Grand Réserve 1998 16 £5.00
Zips along, dripping with tobacco and assorted herbs and rich blackcurrant fruit, touch of earth, and excellent tannins.

Château Quinsac Bellevue, Bordeaux 1998 16. £5.00
A superbly jammy claret which is combative yet not overly austere or too dry. Lovely charcoal edge to the tannins.

Château Saint-Germain Bordeaux Supérieur 1997 13.5 £5 7
Calvet take too many tannins out. Please return them to the rightful owner.

Château Saint-Gilles, 1er Côte de Bordeaux 1998 14.5 £5.00
Bargain quaffing, not necessarily for claret lovers who may find the wine's immediacy and unable-to-age tannins insufficient. Highly drinkable.

Domaine Coste Blanque, Montpeyroux, Coteaux du Languedoc 1998 17 £5–7
Massively mouth filling initial attack of fruit, tannins and gentle acids in perfect, overwhelming harmony. Then it settles down to show its subtle side. A terrific, energetic wine of weight and wit

Domaine de Villemajou, Corbières 1998 16 £5 7
Wild cherries and strawberries, blackcurrants, herbs and a hint of old stable door – a terrifically generous mouthful.

Domaine des Amandiers, Côtes du Roussillon-Villages 1998 15 £5.00
Sweet-natured rusticity with fine-grained tannins. Even has a hint of almond on the finish.

Domaine du Bosquet 16 £5–7
Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998
Superb dry fruit which coats the taste buds with Cassis, leather, earthy herbs and great tannins.

Domaine du Grand Bosc, 15.5 £5.00
Fitou 1998
Sweet/sour edge to the fruit which has a wallop of tannicity as it coats the tongue. It finishes with style.

James Herrick Cuvée 16.5 £5.00
Simone VdP d'Oc 1998
An intensely sophisticated and chic bottle of fruit which accompanies a good book or a complex CD like a dream. Subtle yet tenacious.

La Chasse du Pape Côtes 16.5 £5.00
du Rhône 1998
Stunning ripeness and big earthy, rich plum/blackcurrant dryness and urgency. Lovely tannins. Great texture.

Old Git Grenache Syrah 15.5 £5.00
1999
Great fun. I'm bound to love the name and the dry, Midi fruit

Rhône Valley Red VdP 13 £3.00
de Vaucluse NV

Shiraz Foncalieu 1998 16 £5.00
Simply terrific value: dry yet rich, fruity yet not juicy and puerile, striking yet elegant, ripe yet not OTT. A good glugging wine and casserole candidate.

Tastevinage Bourgogne 10 £7–10
Hautes-Côtes de Nuits
Yves Chaley 1997
So spineless it will never walk off the shelf – let alone trip down the throat with any aplomb.

Thierry & Guy Utter 14.5 £5–7
Bastard Syrah 1998

Vacqueyras Les Agapes 16.5 £5–7
1998
Sweet fruit on top of soft ripe tannins. There is a touch of liquorice to the dark cherries and superb tannins. A little marzipan shows up, too. Great stuff.

Wild Pig Barrel Reserve 14 £5.00
Shiraz 1998
Juice and tannins. Not a traditional recipe.

ASDA WHITE

Baron de Turckheim 16 £7–10
Gewürztraminer 1998
Deliciously subtly spicy and thickly textured. Great with robust Chinese food

Chablis Grand Cru 13 £13–20
Bougros 1996

Chardonnay, Jardin de la 14 £3.50
France 1999
Light, gently fruity, crisp and simply fruity.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 13 £13–20
Blanc 1997

Chenin Blanc Loire 1999, 14 £3.50
Asda
Very simple and charming.

La Domeque 'Tête de 16.5 £5.00
Cuvée' Vieilles Vignes
VdP d'Oc 1998
A superb blend of Roussanne, Marsanne and Muscat grapes resulting in a surprisingly dry, very elegant, subtle rich wine of character, charm, huge sippability and food versatility. It possesses great class and texture.

Muscadet 1999, Asda 13 £3.50
A deep and cheerful glug.

Oak Aged Côtes du Rhône Blanc 1998, Asda 12 £3.50

Rosé d'Anjou 1998, Asda 12.5 £3.50

Sancerre 1999 12 £5–7
Lot of loot for an average bucket of fruit

St-Veran Domaine des Deux Roches 1998 15 £5–7
Lovely plump fruit which has something in common with its Mâcon Davaye cousin.

Tramontane Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999, Asda 16 £5.00
Delicate, delicious, decisive.

Tramontane Chardonnay/ Vermentino 1999, Asda 13.5 £5.00
Very full and rich.

Tramontane Reserve Oak Aged Chardonnay 1997, Asda 14 £5.00

Tramontane Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Asda 15 £5.00
Deliciously compressed and crisp.

Tramontane Viognier 1999, Asda 15.5 £5.00
Lovely apricot fruit with a hint of lemon and pineapple.

Vouvray Denis Marchais 1999 10 £5.00

BOOTHS WHITE

Bergerac Blanc NV, Booths 14 £3.50
A clean, fresh fish wine.

Bordeaux Blanc Sec NV, Booths 13.5 £3.60

Bourgogne Chardonnay Domaine Joseph Matrot NV 12 £5–7
Bit boorish for seven quid.

Chablis Domaine de l'Eglantière 1998 10 £7–10
Eight quid? I'd rather put it on a three-legged horse. At least its presumption would be entertaining.

Château d'Angludet Rosé 1997 13 £5–7

Château Lamothe Vincent, Bordeaux 1999 14 £5.00
A dry oyster catcher.

Château Petit Roubie, Coteaux du Pinet 1999 (organic) 13 £5.00
Organic Midi grapes, somewhat baked.

Château Pierrail Blanc Prestige 1996 15.5 £5–7

Château Pique-Segue, Montravel 1999 15 £5.00
Classy, delicate (yet rich), harmoniously organised and with a crisp, gooseberry undertone.

Clos de Monestier Bergerac Blanc 1999 13.5 £5.00

Clos de Monestier Bergerac Rosé 1999 14.5 £5.00
Delicious

Côtes du Rhône Chaume Arnaud 1998 16 £7–10
Why bother with white burgundy when you have real character here? Deliciously individual, dry, stony, complex pastry-edged fruit.

Domaine de Pellehaut 15 £5.00
Côtes de Gascogne 1999
Pineapple scented and fruited, a vague touch of mango, and strong hint of lime.

Domaine de Petit Roubie, 15 £5.00
Marsanne 1999 (organic)
Curiously rich and ready. Has a very subtle toffeed tang.

Edelzwicker Aimé Stentz 14.5 £5.00
1998

Gewürztraminer d'Alsace 15.5 £5-7
Turckheim 1999
Complex layers of gooseberry, lychee, lemon and some unidentifiable, possibly exotic, fruit all integrated and charming

James Herrick 16 £5.00
Chardonnay VdP d'Oc
1999
Very elegant, subtle, gently fruity, stylish and well-priced. Lovely lemon edge as it finishes.

La Passion Blanc VdP de 15 £3.50
Vaucluse 1999
Has some warm fruity touches, ripe melon in style, but the overall theme is simple refreshment.

Louis Chatel Sur Lie VdP 14 £3.50
d'Oc 1999
Rich, plump and ready for food.

Muscadet Sur Lie La 13.5 £5.00
Roche Renard 1998

Pouilly-Fumé les Cornets, 10 £7-10
Cailbourdin 1997

Riesling d'Alsace Amie 13 £5-7
Stentz 1997

Sancerre Domaine du 14.5 £7-10
Petit Roy, Dezat 1998

Vermentino Les Yeuses 13.5 £3.50
VdP d'Oc 1999
Hints of gooseberry and a very subtle touch of strawberry lurk amid the clinging acids.

Vin Blanc NV, Booths 12 £3.50
Rusticity is its middle name.

BUDGENS WHITE

Bordeaux Blanc Sec 1998 15 £3.50

Bordeaux Sauvignon NV, 13.5 £5.00
Budgens
Most drinkable. Agreeably fruity and firm.

Chablis Delaroche 1999 11 £7-10
Not hugely impressive for the money.

Domaine Villeroy- 14 £5.00
Castellas Sauvignon 1998

French Organic White 13 £5.00
NV
Fruity and earthy. Needs strong food.

James Herrick 16 £5.00
Chardonnay 1999
Very elegant and controlled. A class act. One of the Languedoc's top Chardonnays.

'L' Grande Cuvée VdP 15.5 £5-7
d'Oc 1999
Very rich and warm with ripe ogen melon fruit, slightly creamy and vaguely smoky, with a hint of ripe pineapple. A very classy, deep wine.

Premium Oaked 14 £5.00
Chardonnay VdP d'Oc,
Devereux NV
Touch of class here.

Alsace Gewürztraminer 16.5 £5-7
Producteurs A.
Eguisheim 1997

What a delicious, rich, unpretentious, calm and collected Gewürz we have here! Wonderful fruit (hints of lime, mango, lychees, rowanberry, papaya, guava – okay, only kidding) but it is faintly spicy and rosy rich. Superstores only.

Chablis, Les Vignerons de Chablis 1998 13.5 £7–10
Yes, it's drinkable but eight quid makes you think (about things other than wine).

Chardonnay VdP du Jardin Pierre Guery 1998 13 £5.00

Chardonnay-Chenin Vegetarian NV, Co-op 12.5 £5.00

Château Pierrousselle Blanc, Entre-Deux-Mers 1998 13 £5.00

Domaine des Perruches Vouvray 1998 13.5 £5–7
Superb clash of dry, dry honey and crisp, assertive acids. The result is a terrific aperitif. Superstores only.

Fortant VdP d'Oc Sauvignon Blanc 1999 13 £5.00
Bit stand-offish.

James Herrick Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
Very elegant, subtle, gently fruity, stylish and well-priced. Lovely lemon edge as it finishes.

Monbazillac Domaine du Haut-Rauly 1995 (half-bottle) 14.5 £5.00

Montagny 1er Cru 1998 13 £7.10

Orchid Vale Chardonnay Grenache Blanc 1999 13.5 £5.00
From a bottle which looks as if it might administer strychnine comes curiously waspish fruit. Superstores only.

Rhône Valley White 1999 14 £3.50
Handsome texture, good underripe fruit, touch of earth – a solid Rhône blanc, great with food.

Sancerre Domaine Raimbault 1998 13 £7–10

VdP d'Oc Sauvignon Blanc NV, Co-op 14 £5.00

Vin de Pays d'Oc Chardonnay 1999, Co-op 13 £5.00
Bruised fruit edge.

Vin de Pays d'Oc Chardonnay Chenin Blanc NV, Co-op 14.5 £5.00

Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne, Co-op 14.5 £3.50

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Blanc de France Vin de Table NV 15.5 £3.50

Chablis Domaine de Bouchots Cuvée Boissonneuse 1998 12.5 £5–7

Chardonnay en Sol Oxfordien, Bourgogne 1998 14 £5–7

Chardonnay VdP du Jardin de la France 1999 13 £5.00
Rather flat as it surges to the throat.

Chenin Blanc VdP du Jardin de la France 1997 15.5 £2.50

James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999 16 £5.00
Very elegant, subtle, gently fruity,

stylish and well-priced. Lovely lemon edge as it finishes.

Les Marionettes Marsanne VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Deliciously rich and generous: creamy, smoky, textured, good finish.

Les Oliviers du Jardin Vin de Table NV 15.5 –£2.50

VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardèche Blanc 1999, Somerfield 14.5 –£3.50
Lemon and melon. Thoroughly different and drinkable.

VdP du Comte du Tolosan, Les Chais Beaucarois 1998 14 –£3.50
Great with moules marinières – it really hits those molluscs.

Wild Trout VdP d'Oc 1997 15.5 –£5.00

Côtes de Provence 1999 (rosé) 11 –£5.00

Domaine de la Pouvraie Vouvray 1999 14 –£5.00
Woody richness typical of Chenin from the Loire. Sweet edge to it.

Gold Label Chardonnay Reserve 1998 15.5 £5–7

Gold Label Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999 13 –£5.00
Nice plumpness and freshness here.

Gold Label Sauvignon Blanc VdP d'Oc 1999 14 –£5.00
Very dry and uncompromisingly food orientated

Gold Label Viognier 1999 14 –£5.00
Very austere for a Viognier. The apricot fruit is muted.

Les Ruetttes Sancerre 1999 15.5 £7–10
A crisp, deliciously mineral-edged Sauvignon.

Mâcon-Villages 1999 15.5 £5–7
I like very much the typical vegetal edge. It's a real white burgundy.

Pouilly-Fumé 1999 16 £7–10
An exceptional Fumé Sauvignon with real lemon fruit and clean-finishing elegance.

Rivesaltes Ambre Hors d'Age 25 Year 15.5 £7–10
Baked fruit melee, crème brûlée, sticky-toffee pudding and roasted nuts. All in one glass!

Rosé de Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999 14 –£5.00
Good chewy cherry fruit.

VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999 13 –£3.50

M&S WHITE

Bordeaux Sauvignon 1999 13.5 –£5.00
Sour/dry edge to the finish inspires the idea that shellfish will radically change this wine's sullen disposition.

Chablis 1997 13.5 £7–10

Chablis Grand Cru Grenouille 1994 12 £13–20

Chablis Premier Cru 1996 13 £10–13

Château Les Charmes de Saint-Mayme, Monbazillac 1995 16 £7–10
Interesting waxy fruit, the hallmark of good Monbazillac, and what sets it apart from Sauternes. Brilliant dessert and blue cheese wine.

Light, playful, frisky with lemon/ pineapple fruit.

Vin de Pays du Gers 1999 14 £3.50
Very crisp and molar clenching.

MAJESTIC WHITE

Bois de Lamothe Sauvignon Blanc, VdP du Lot et Garonne 1997 15 £3.50

Bott-Geyl Gewürztraminer Grand Cru Sonnenglanz 1998 17.5 £10–13
About as good as young Gewürz gets: pears, peaches, rose petals, raspberries and honey and intriguing acids. Left for seven to eight years it'll rate twenty.

Bott-Geyl Riesling Burgreben de Zellenberg 1997 14.5 £7–10
Bit raw but will progress extremely well if cellared for five or six years. Possibly seventeen or eighteen points in time.

Bott-Geyl Riesling Grafenreben de Zellenberg 1997 15 £7–10
More immediately fruity and subtly rich and will develop if cellared – three years?

Bott-Geyl Tokay Pinot Gris 1998 15 £7–10
Two layers of apricot fruit now. Leave it five or six years and it'll develop even more.

Bott-Geyl Tokay Pinot Gris Sonnenglanz Vendages Tardives 1998 14 £13–20
Try it with foie gras or blue cheese. It is intensely sweet.

Cave de Ribeauville Gewürztraminer 1998 16 £5–7
Delicious rosy richness! Great quaffing specimen. Concentrated and deeply charming.

Cave de Ribeauville Tokay Pinot Gris 1998 15 £5–7
Lovely dry edge to the firm peach/ apricot fruit. Excellent aperitif.

Chablis 1er Cru Côte de Lechet La Chablisienne 1998 12 £10–13

Chablis Domaine Marguerite Carillon 1998 15.5 £5.00
A superbly well-tailored, rich Chablis in the gentle New World mould of textured softness yet crisp-to-finish vivacity. Fantastic bargain. The label will have wine buffs wetting their pants.

Chablis Domaine Vocoret 1998 13.5 £7–10

Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos 1998 10 £13–20

Chardonnay Jean Belmont VdP du Jardin de la France 1999 15 £5.00
Gooseberries, pears and plumpness. Grand little quaffer.

Chassagne-Montrachet Fontaine-Gagnard 1er Cru La Maltroie 1997 10 £20+

Château du Sours Rosé 1999 15 £5–7
Delicious, food friendly fruit. A lovely summer barbecue wine.

Château Haut Mazières Blanc, Bordeaux 1997 16 £5–7
Very classy. The hint of vegetality

only confirms it. Lovely food-friendly fruit.

Château Méaume Rosé 1999 14 £5–7
Sweet and rich.

Chenin Blanc VdP du Jardin de la France, Rémy Pannier NV 14.5 £3.50

Chinon Rosé Couly-Dutheil 1998 13 £5–7

Condrieu Guigal 1998 15.5 £13–20
Very delicious if not entirely typical of the breed (Viognier grape apricots). The finish is dry and nutty.

Corton-Charlemagne, Bonneau du Martray 1996 10 £20+

Côtes du Rhône Rosé Guigal 1997 14 £6–7

Cuvée Apolline Tokay Pinot Gris 1997 13 £10–13
Disappointing at the price.

Domaine de Raissac CVM Barrique 1999 15 –£5.00
Nice ripe gooseberry edge to it
Yummy stuff

Domaine de Raissac Viognier 1999 15.5 £5.00
Apricots and crisp appley acids. A terrific recipe.

Domaine des Fontanelles Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 –£5.00
Simply terrific quaffing.

Domaine Le Puts Blanc Michel Bordes 1999 16 –£3.50
Brilliant value: has gorgeously amusing fruit combining pears, raspberries, lemons and crisp acids to refreshingly delicious effect.

Gewürztraminer, Haegelin 1998 14.5 £7–10
Great with Chinese and Thai food.

Gewürztraminer Paul Zinck 1999 13.5 £7–10
Sweet spicy finish. Needs oriental food.

Givry Blanc Louis Latour 1996 10 £7–10

Grand Ardèche Chardonnay Louis Latour 1998 15 £5–7
The best vintage yet of this Latour attempt to break out of the Burgundy mould. The wine is creamy and well built, elegant yet rich.

Le Fauve Chasan 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Extremely fruity and very charming. Utterly quaffable and quaintly quirky.

Le Fauve Marsanne 1999 16 –£5.00
Gorgeous quaffing here of some quality. The fruit is rich, ripe, ready – yet elegant and handsomely textured. Has a peach/apricot/pear medley to it.

Le Fauve Rosé de Syrah 1999 14.5 –£5.00
Absolutely charming! Delicious dry cherries

Les Fontanelles Viognier Foncalieu 1999 16 –£5.00
Has a very developed peachy richness which unfolds on the front, middle and back palate to excellent effect.

Les Grands Clochers Chardonnay 1999 14.5 £5–7
Ripe and mouthfilling, energetic and easy to glug

Moulin Touchais, Coteaux du Layon 1986 16 £7–10

Very sweet but has a multiplicity of subtle soft fruit undertones.

Muscadet Cuvée du Homard 1998 14 £3.50

Muscadet Homard 1998 13.5 £3.50
Rather good for fish parties (schools?).

Muscadet sur Lie Château la Touche 1998 13.5 £5.00

Muscat Riquewihr, Bott-Geyl 1997 15 £7–10
A very elegant aperitif. Individual and very incisive.

Pinot Blanc Haegelin 1998 13.5 £5.7
Bit basic.

Quincy JC Bourguat 1999 15 £5–7
Deliciously warm and plumply textured.

Reuilly Beurdin 1999 14 £5–7
I like it.

Riesling Bollenberg, Haegelin 1998 13 £5–7
Rather underdeveloped.

Sancerre La Chaudillonne Fournier 1997 10 £7–10
Quite remarkably fat and blowsily sweet.

Sancerre Rosé Vacheron 1999 10 £7–10
Bit thin and fruitless for nigh on ten quid.

Sauvignon Lot 279, Bordeaux 1998 13 £5.00

Sauvignon Touraine Delauney 1999 12 £5.00
Very sweet to finish.

Sylvaner, Paul Zinck 1998 14.5 £5.00

Tokay Pinot Gris, Haegelin 1998 13.5 £7–10
Some pleasantries from the peaches found here.

Vivian Ducourneau VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999 15.5 £5.00
Impish, irreverent, fun, clean, cheering, lively – a mix of lemon, lime, pineapple and the rare Hawaiian fruit, shaped like bovine genitalia, the kumquat.

Vouvray Tris de Nobles Grain, Domaine Bourillon Dorléans 1995 (50cl) 16 £10–13
Beautiful richness and ripeness. Put it down for a few years and it'll be even more complex.

MORRISONS WHITE

Bordeaux Blanc de Ginestet 1998 15.5 £5.00
Rather classy – woody, refined, stylish, excellent with rich fish and chicken dishes. Most stores.

Château La Fage Bergerac Sec 1998 13 £5.00
Bit flat as it finishes.

Château Loupiac Gaudiet, Loupiac 1996 (50cl) 16 £5.00
A really different pudding wine combining raw honey, limes, lychees, pawpaw and a touch of strawberry. Go for it!

Falcon Ridge Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999 15 £3.50
So warm and thick you could grease

an axle with it. Rich melon fruit of unreserved lushness

Falcon Ridge Rosé VdP d'Oc 1997 14 —£3.50

Falcon Ridge Sauvignon Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999 14 —£3.50
The richer kind of Sauvignon, nothing dry about it.

Gewürztraminer Preiss Zimmer 1998 13.5 £5–7
Deliciously rich, gently honeyed and lychee-fruited and great with oriental food

Haut-Poitou Sauvignon Blanc NV 14 —£3.50

James Herrick Chardonnay 1999 16 —£5.00
Very elegant, subtle, gently fruity, stylish and well-priced. Lovely lemon edge as it finishes.

Mâcon-Villages Teissedre 1998 13 —£5.00

Pinot Blanc Preiss Zimmer 1998 13.5 —£5.00

Rhône Valley White 1998 14 —£3.50

Saint-Véran 1998 13 £5–7
Hint of butter, but it's thinly spread

Sancerre la Renardière 1999 12 £7–10
Very fruity Sancerre, almost sweet
Very untypical, even eccentric.

Sichel Premières Côtes de Bordeaux Blanc NV 12.5 —£5.00
Far too clotted and sweet for this dry old dog

Winter Hill White 1998 14 —£3.50

ODDBINS WHITE

Burgundy Blanc 'Cuvée Saint-Vincent', Vincent Giradin 1998 15 —£5.00

Château de Fesles Rosé d'Anjou 1998 13.5 —£5.00

Château Grand Escalion Rosé, Costières de Nîmes 1999 13.5 £5–7
Cherry bright but a touch pricey for the style

Clos Petite Bellane, Côtes du Rhône 1999 16 £5–7
Superb control of acids and rich fruit here. Melon/lime/pineapple and a hint of peach – but it's dry-packed and punchy on the finish.

Clos Petite Bellane Rosé, Côtes du Rhône 1999 13.5 £5–7
Bit sour on the finish.

Comte Cathare Domaine Begude Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999 15 —£5.00
Has some expressive sullen touches but overall is seriously fruity.

Comte Cathare Domaine Begude Limoux 1998 15.5 £7–10
Complex and concentrated, accomplished richness, subtle ripeness, good mineral edge to the acids. Individual and hugely foodworthy.

Comte Cathare Marsanne/Viognier, VdP d'Oc 1999 15 —£5.00
Delicious apricot and lemon fruit.

Domaine Borie de Maurel Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Individual approach to the chic variety

– has a sweet toffee edge which mingles deliciously with the pert acids.

Domaine Borie de Maurel 15 £5–7
Cuvée Aude, Minervois 1999
Has an odd bitter edge. Needs food.

Domaine Cady Coteaux du Layon St-Aubin 'Cuvée Harmonie' 1997 (50cl) 16.5 £7–10
Sweet butterscotch, rum, a hint of wild artichoke, wild raspberry and lots of honey – did you pick up that lot? You might.

Domaine de la Renaudie Touraine Sauvignon 1999 14 – £5.00
Very extruded and elongated. Needs fish to flow fully.

Domaine de Montahuc Muscat, Muscat de Saint-Jean de Minervois 1998 (50cl) 15.5 £5–7
Not as outrageously sweet as you might think as there's spicy lemon in there along with a hint of pear drop and toffee.

Dourthe No 1 Bordeaux 1999 13.5 – £5.00
An attractive fish wine.

James Herrick Chardonnay 1999 16 – £5.00
Very elegant and controlled. A class act. One of the Languedoc's top Chardonnays.

James Herrick Domaine Les Garrigues de Truilhas Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998 16 £5–7
More French than anything Jim has turned out before – in the sense of the vegetality of the wine and the wood and herbs.

Kiwi Cuvée Sauvignon Blanc VdP du Jardin de la France 1999 15 – £5.00
Wow! The Kiwis shows the Frogs how to jump start the Sauvignon. Delicious fruit here of elegance and concentration

Les Clos de Paulilles Rosé 1999 15 £5–7
One of the most dynamic and lingering rosés I've tasted.

Mâcon Davaye Domaine des Deux Roches 1998 16 £5–7
One of the best vintages from a rarely disappointing producer. Classic minor white Burgundy (by name) which manages to touch major Burgundy heights of texture and gentle fruit.

Menetou-Salon Morogues 'Clos de Ratier', Pelle 1998 13 £7–10

Montagny 1er Cru, Domaine Maurice Bertrand 1997 13 £7–10

Pouilly-Fumé Le Champ des Vignes, Tabordet 1998 12 £7–10

Sancerre Domaine de la Rossignole 1998 12.5 £7–10

St-Romain 'Sous le Château' Baron de la Charrière 1998 13.5 £10–13
Very expensive, lemony construct.

St-Véran les Cras, Lassarat 1996 12 £13–20
Fine Wine Stores only.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Bourgogne Chardonnay Barrique Réserve 1998 15 £5–7
Very satisfying and collected. Good rich fruit – not overbaked.

Chablis Laroche 1999 12 £7–10
Far too expensive for the rigidity of the style.

Chardonnay VdP de l'Herault 1999, Safeway 14 –£5.00
Rich, ripe, ready for any action. Even Mission Impossible: tandoori octopus.

Château de la Gravelle, Muscadet de Sevre-et-Maine Sur Lie 1998 14 –£5.00
One of the more interesting and attractively structured Muscadets around.

Château du Roc Bordeaux Sauvignon 1999 12 –£5.00
Humm . . .

Château Magneau, Graves 1999 15 £5–7
A good fish wine, a solid quaffing companion: a wine for dry pursuits.

Château Petit Roubie, Coteaux du Languedoc 1999 (organic) 13.5 –£5.00
Oddly agitated dryness.

Domaine de Bosquet Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998 16 £5–7
Complex spread of flavours which work from coriander and melon (with a hint of raspberry) to pineapple acidity.

Domaine de Ciffre Viognier VdP d'Oc 1999 16 £5–7
Soft apricot fruit which lushly lingers with hints of buttered raspberries and yoghurt.

Domaine de l'Ecu Muscadet de Sevre-et-Maine Sur Lie 1999 (biodynamic) 12 –£5.00
Intensely lean and mean. Selected stores.

Domaine Lafage Muscat Sec, VdP d'Oc 1999 14 –£5.00
Not remotely sweet but coyly dry.

Dourthe No 1 Bordeaux 1999 13.5 –£5.00
An attractive fish wine.

French Révolution Le Blanc 1999 13 –£5.00
Rather cosmetic edge to a wholly gungo product.

James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999 16 –£5.00
Very elegant, subtle, gently fruity, stylish and well-priced. Lovely lemon edge as it finishes.

L'If Grenache Blanc, Elevé en Fûts de Chêne, VdP d'Oc 1999 15 –£5.00
Elegant, fruity, subtle, delicious

La Source Chardonnay/ Roussanne VdP d'Oc 1999 16 –£5.00
Superb marriage of grapes: buttery yet crisp, dry yet melony, deep yet athletic, rich yet delicate.

Montagny Premier Cru 1998, Safeway 14 £7–10

Pinot Blanc Alsace 1998, Safeway 13.5 –£5.00

Sancerre 1999, Safeway 12 £5–7
Cloying, annoying, expensive, very blatant.

Sancerre 'Les Bonnes Bouches' 1999 13 £7–10
Edge, very very edgy. Not quite confident enough for me at nine quid.

Sauvignon Blanc Cuvée Réserve VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 £5.00
Not a classic lean Sauvignon, but a rich softie. I like it lots

St-Véran 1997 13 £5–7
Most stores.

VdP de l'Ardèche Rosé 1999, Safeway 14 £3.50
Cherry-edged yet dry and food-friendly.

Viognier Cuvée Réserve, VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 £5.00
Deliciously serious, and apricotty and nutty but very subtle richness.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Alsace Gewürztraminer 1999, Sainsbury's 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous rose/lychee/spicy fruit of expressiveness and rich deliciousness. Marvellous quaffing stuff and great with oriental food. Most stores.

Blanc Anjou, Medium Dry, Sainsbury's 12 £3.50

Bordeaux Blanc de Ginestet 1998 15.5 £5.00
Rather classy – woody, refined, stylish, excellent with rich fish and chicken dishes. Most stores

Bordeaux Blanc, Sainsbury's 14.5 £3.50

Bourgogne Blanc, Louis Max 1998 14 £5–7
A real vegetal minor white Burgundy, slightly coarse, gently austere. Not at all stores.

Cabernet Rosé de Loire, Lurton 1999 13.5 £5.00
Refreshing and cherry-edged. Very light and robust food will kill it. Most stores.

Chablis 1er Cru Les Fourchaumes 1998 14 £13–20
A very delicate, very authentic Chablis of charm and eligibility (for pleasant sipping). £17? Yes, but it has a crisp classiness. Not at all stores.

Chardonnay VdP d'Oc, Sainsbury's (3-litre box) 15.5 £15.00
A Chardonnay which comes across like a Burgundy – gently fat, vegetal, dry, with both quaffability and food matchability. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Chardonnay VdP du Jardin de la France, Lurton 1999 14.5 £3.00
Hints of plump melon but it's mainly subtle citrus. Has a deal of charm, this wine. Most stores.

Château Carsin, Cadillac 1998 (half-bottle) 16 £5–7
A wonderfully young yet completely sweet Bordeaux with honey and a hint of orange/lemon peel. Terrific with pastry desserts Selected stores.

Château du Sours Rosé 1999 15 £5–7
Delicious, food-friendly fruit. A lovely summer barbecue wine.

Classic Selection Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine 1999, Sainsbury's 16 £5.00
Astonishing! The highest-rating

Muscadet I've tasted in twenty years
Wonderfully minerally, knife-sharp fruit. Most stores

Classic Selection Pouilly-Fumé 1999, Sainsbury's 13.5 £7–10
Rather good, for a load of Pouilly. Very fat and New World-ish. Most stores.

Classic Selection Sancerre 1999, Sainsbury's 13.5 £7–10
Expensive, but decently crisp. A touch lean on the fruit for eight quid.

Classic Selection Vouvray 1999, Sainsbury's 15 £5–7
Half-sweet fruit, or demi-sec if you will. Makes an amusing warm weather aperitif. Most stores.

Condrieu Guigal 1998 15.5 £13–20
Very delicious if not entirely typical of the breed (Viognier grape – apricots). The finish is dry and nutty.

Domaine de la Perrière Sancerre 1999 15 £7–10
Bit much, £8.50 for a four quid wine. Not at all stores.

Domaine Leonce Cuisset, Saussignac 1996 15 £7–10

French Révolution Le Blanc 1999 13 £5.00
Rather cosmetic edge to a wholly gungo product.

La Baume Sauvignon Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999 15 –£5.00
Lovely warmth to the under-ripe melon fruit which is amply balanced by delicious acids. Most stores.

LPA Côtes de St-Mont Blanc 1998 15 –£5.00

Mâcon Chardonnay, 16 £5–7

Domaine les Ecuyers 1998
A splendid minor white burgundy. Restrained vegetality, good acids, firm fruit on the finish. Selected stores.

Mercurey Blanc Domaine la Marche les Rochelles 1998 13 £13–20
Finishes a bit short for fourteen quid. 50 stores

Montagny 'Les Rosiers' 1998 14 £7–10
Very hard, clean, gunflinty fruit. Selected stores.

Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie NV, Sainsbury's (3-litre box) 13 –£3.50
The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie, La Goelette 1999 14 –£5.00
Crisp and clean. Muscadet as more Muscadets ought to be but seldom are. Most stores.

Orchid Vale Medium French Chardonnay Grenache Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999 13.5 –£5.00
Very quirky and risibly packed (blue bottle). Young things will love it. Most stores.

Petit Chablis 1999 13 £5–7

Pouilly-Fumé, Cuvée Pierre Louis 1999 14.5 £7–10
A fine steely specimen. Not at all stores.

Réserve St-Marc Sauvignon Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999 16 –£5.00

Why doesn't the Sancerre, using the same grape, taste so elegant and powerful? Ah, the mysteries of French soil and sun (and bullshit – the customary manure). Most stores

Touraine Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5.00
Delicious nuttiness and concentrated grassy fruit. Most stores.

Vin Blanc de France, Sainsbury's (3-litre box) 12 £3.50
Old-fashioned rustic mustiness which makes little attempt to appear modern, well-cut, distinctive. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Vin de Pays de l'Aude Blanc, Sainsbury's 15 £3.50

Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne NV, Sainsbury's 15 £3.50

Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne, Sainsbury's (3-litre box) 15 £3.50
Delicious aperitif-style fruit uniting hard fruit (apple and pear) with soft fruit (mostly strawberry). It's not OTT fruit-wise, however, for there are solid, fresh acids. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Vouvray la Couronne des Plantagenets 1999 15 £5.00
Yes, it's a sweet edged thing. And it's young. Give it a couple of years for the minerals to develop. I'm drinking the '95 of this wine at home now. Most stores

White Burgundy NV, Sainsbury's 14 £5–7

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Anjou Blanc 1999, Somerfield 13.5 £3.50
Excellent with Thai food Has a demi-sweet edge which really calms chillies and coriander.

Bordeneuve Blanc VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999 13 £5.00
Just a touch too fruity for me.

Chablis 1998, Somerfield 14 £7–10
Rather good edge of rich melon and thoroughly crisp minerals.

Chablis Premier Cru 1997 10 £10–13

Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999, Somerfield 14.5 £5.00
Rich melon and sulky lemon.

Chardonnay VdP du Jardin de la France 1999 13 £5.00
Rather flat as it surges to the throat.

Domaine d' Arain Muscat de Frontignan (50cl) 16 £5.00
Wonderful honeyed, strawberry/peach-edged sweetness here. Great with pastry tarts and crème brûlée and ice cream. Terrific price and the size makes it perfect for a lovable pair of meal-ending hedonists.

Domaine du Bois Viognier VdP d'Oc, Maurel Vedeau 1998 16 £5.00
It's the superb texture and faint smoky edge to the apricots which make the wine so palate-teasingly breezy.

Entre-Deux-Mers 1998, Somerfield 12 £5.00
Touch on the dull side.

French Oak Aged Chardonnay, Domaine Ste-Agathe 1998 16 £5–7

Very stylishly assembled from melons, figs, wood, sunshine and crisp, crisp apples and lemons.

Gewürztraminer Caves de Turckheim 1999 16 £5–7
Superb smoky, rose-petal, lychee and pawpaw richness with a very subtle undertone of coriander. A marvellous companion to all matters oriental.

Goûts et Couleurs Chardonnay Viognier 1999 15.5 £5.00
Delicious apricot and melon richness with a touch of lemon and a lingering suggestion of mango.

Goûts et Couleurs Cinsault Rosé 1999 14 £5.00
Goes a bit gooey and Marilyn Monroe-ish on the finish, but the fruit is a great performer with food.

Hautes-Côtes de Beaune, Labouré-Roi 1998 13 £5–7
Very lemony

James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999 16 £5.00
Very elegant, subtle, gently fruity, stylish and well-priced. Lovely lemon edge as it finishes.

Laperouse Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1996 16.5 £5.00
A brilliant white Burgundy taste alike (if that doesn't insult it). Mature, vegetal, creamy, ripe, deep and hugely provocative. A fantastic bargain. Pour the wine into jugs and tell your friends it's Meursault.

Les Marionettes Marsanne VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 £5.00
Deliciously rich and generous: creamy, smoky, textured, good finish.

Muscat de Frontignan NV (50 cl) 17 £5.00
Fantastic accompaniment to pastry desserts: it's creamy, toffeed, caramel-edged, hugely honeyed and husky and it tastes like a drink you could offer to a goddess (before you ask her to live with you).

Rivers Meet Sauvignon Sémillon 1999 13 £5.00
Very firm and fruity.

Sancerre Domaine les Grands Groux 1999 13 £7–10
Too expensive for this pocket.

VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardèche Blanc 1999, Somerfield 14.5 £3.50
Lemon and melon. Thoroughly different and drinkable.

VdP du Comte du Tolosan, Les Chais Beaucarois 1998 14 £3.50
Great with moules marinières – it really hits those molluscs.

Vouvray 1997, Somerfield 14 £5.00
Keep it for a few years, it'll liven up even more. But an interesting, off-dry aperitif, waxy honey and dry leaves, now.

White Burgundy 1999, Somerfield 13.5 £5–7
Trying hard. Oh so hard!

Winter Hill White, VdP de l'Aude NV 14 £3.50
Good melon/pineapple/lemon attack – gentle of course.

SPAR WHITE

Chablis La Chablisienne 1998, Spar 14 £7–10

Lot of money, but it's drinkable if not thrilling. Has some vague pretensions to class.

French Country VdP de l'Hérault White NV 13 £5.00
Touch expensive for the fruit, which seems a little hollow on the finish.

Grenache VdP d'Oc NV 10 £3.50

La Côte Chasan Chardonnay 1999 13 £5.00
Touch muddy on the finish. Ill-defined structure.

Muscat de St-Jean de Minervois, Spar (half-bottle) 15.5 £3.50
Honeyed, subtly waxy, hint of pineapple to sweet fruit. Ice cream? Strawberries? Yes but it has the subtlety to serve as an aperitif – even though some palates will dismiss it as sweet – but for me a glass of such a wine as this is very uplifting before gossip round a dinner table.

Oaked Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar 12.5 £3.00
Hmm . . . can't make up its mind, quite. Am I dry? Am I fresh? Or am I just loosely put together?

Pouilly-Fuissé Les Vercheres Chardonnay 1996, Spar 10 £10–13

Salaison Chardonnay Sauvignon 1998, Spar 13 £5.00
Delicious: nuts, melons, lemons and a hint of raspberry.

Sancerre Saget 1998 10 £7–10
Dreadful stuff. Pretentious codswallop.

Unoaked Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999, Spar 14 £5.00
Mild melon fruit and demure acids. A quiet wine, quite nice.

Vin de Pays de l'Aude Blanc NV, Spar 12 £3.50

White Burgundy Chardonnay 1996, Spar 13 £5–7

TESCO WHITE

Alsace Gewürztraminer 1998, Tesco 16 £5–7
Lovely rich, rosy fruit, hint of ripe lychee and a touch of pear, and the whole construct is designed to soothe the troubled mind or lubricate Thai food. At most stores.

Alsace Riesling 1998, Tesco 14 £5.7
Classy, typical, reluctant, dry, acquired testiness. Needs smoked salmon for the tender-palated. At most stores.

Anjou Blanc NV, Tesco 13 £3.50
Slightly sweet, slightly yukky.

Barrique Aged Marsanne Roussanne VdP d'Oc 1998 15.5 £5.00
The bottle I tasted was corked. That is to say there was a musty tang bequeathed by the cork which spoiled the fruit. Nevertheless – and I have never before done this - I will rate it as I have because I could still detect, from the colour, texture and acid balance, that here was an interesting wine – but for that plague-ridden twig in its neck.

Cabernet de Saumur Rosé NV, Tesco 14.5 £5.09
A good dry summer rosé. Not remotely cosmetic or over baked as too many rosés are.

Celsius Dry Muscat 1999 13.5 £5.00

Interesting only, I feel, when the weather is humid, the wine cold, the company outrageous. Not at all stores.

Chablis 1998, Tesco 12.5 £5–7
Dull for seven quid.

Coteaux du Layon Saint-Aubin Domaine Cady 1996 16 £5–7
Gorgeous honey and straw-rich (and coloured) off-dry aperitif or a wine to gulp with fresh fruit. Laid down for ten years or more it might achieve a perfect twenty score for it has complex acids to the waxy fruit which will permit it to develop fascinatingly well into the next decade and beyond.

Côtes du Rhône Blanc NV, Tesco 15 £3.50
Warm and gentle – not unlike the soft earth from which it has sprung.

Domaine Cazal Viel Viognier 1999 16 £5–7
The moment the beautiful golden liquid flows into the glass and you raise it to the eye, then the nose, you know you're in for a treat. And so it transpires as you raise the wine to the lips and the taste buds revel in subtle apricot fruit, lemon and a hint of nuttiness. A lovely, elegant wine of some class and smoothly textured delivery.

Domaine de Montauberon Marsanne 1998 12 £5.00

Domaine du Soleil Chardonnay VdP d'Oc NV 14 £5.00
Seems demure, almost shy, at first and then it puts in a lovely burst of rich nuttiness as it lingers on the finish.

Domaine du Soleil Sauvignon/Chardonnay VdP d'Oc NV 14 £5.00
Very fat, sunny finish. Needs food.

Entre-Deux-Mers NV, Tesco 13.5 £5.00
Simple, fruity, gently plump. Not typical (ie dry and fresh), but the lemon undertone augurs well for fish.

French Chardonnay NV, Tesco 13.5 £3.50
Cheap enough, and reasonably cheerful

French Chenin Blanc NV, Tesco 14.5 £3.50
Impossible to complain, at £2.99, about this citrussy specimen with its keen finish and overall freshness. Also available in five litres.

French Viognier VdP d'Oc 1999, Tesco 15 £5.00
The apricot depth of the fruit is controlled by the delicious lemon coating.

Gaston d'Orléans Vouvray Demi Sec 1998 12 £5–7

James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998 16.5 £5.00
Cracking performer: elegant toasty fruit, firm balance of fresh acid (lemon-edged) and an overall politeness of manner and form. Has well-established credentials which the '98 vintage only amplifies. Not at all stores.

Les Estoiles Organic Chardonnay/Chenin VdP d'Oc NV 13.5 £3.00

Les Quatre Clochers Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
Fat, full, touch frolicsome on the

finish, and a different approach to the cloying melonosity of Chardonnay in that the fruit has a subtle pâtisserie edge on the finish.

Mâcon Blanc Villages 1998, Tesco 11 ~£5.00

Meursault 1er Cru Les Genevrières 1988 10 £20+
Oxidative and old hat. Top 85 stores.

Montagny Oak Aged 1997 13.5 £7–10

Muscadet NV, Tesco 13.5 ~£3.50

Muscadet Sur Lie 1999, Tesco 13 ~£5.00

Oak Aged White Burgundy 1998, Tesco 13.5 £5–7
Plump and modern. That's an advance for Burgundy, I guess.

Pouilly-Fuissé Louis Jadot 1998 11 £10–13
Thirteen quid? Provocative – unlike the liquid itself.

Pouilly-Fumé Cuvée Jules 1998 13 £7–10

Sancerre 1999, Tesco 10 £5–7
Raggedy baggedy fruit of minimal charm; indeed, it's a bit of a sourpuss.

Vouvray, Tesco 12 ~£5.00
Sweet

White Burgundy 1999, Tesco 12 ~£5.00
Too fruitless, over penceful.

THRESHER WHITE

Chablis Domaine de Bieville 1998 14 £7–10
If you want classic clean Chablis, Chardonnay whistle fresh, you have to pay for it. Not at Wine Rack.

Chablis Regional Classics 1997 13.5 £7–10
Aficionados of Chablis will find attractive features in this style of Chardonnay and yet £7.99? Can't help wondering about life and relative values

Chablis Vieilles Vignes, Defaix 1996 11 £10–13

Chablis Vieilles Vignes, La Cuvée Exceptionelle, Defaix 1997 12.5 £13–20

Château Filhot Sauternes 1990 15 £20+

Château Petit Moulin Blanc, Bordeaux 1998 12.5 £5–7

Domaine Pré Baron Sauvignon de Touraine 1998 14.5 £5–7
Very fresh-faced and keenly cut. Wine Rack only.

Domaine Tariquert Sauvignon Blanc 1999 14 £5–7
Incisive edge on the finish clinches the points. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

French Révolution Le Blanc 1999 13 ~£5.00
Rather cosmetic edge to a wholly gungo product.

Le Vieux Mas Marsanne Viognier VdP d'Oc 1998 15 ~£5.00

Les Pierres Blanches Sancerre 1998 12 £7–10
Silly price really for basic fruit. Bottoms Up only.

Old Bush Vines Grenache Blanc 1999 14 ~£5.00
Unusual dryness and nervous sided

pertness here. Very good fish wine. Not at Wine Rack.

Orchid Vale Medium Chardonnay 1999 10 –£5.00
Strictly as a reward for your great-grandma when she wins a packet at bingo.

Petit Chablis de Maligny 1996 13.5 £7–10
Warmth and some hint of activity from the fruit, but at the price . . . Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Riesling Wintzenheim Zind Humbrecht 1997 14 £7–10

Riesling Zind Humbrecht Clos Hauserer 1997 14 £13–20

Tequirat Côtes de Gascogne 1998 14 –£5.00
Delicious, crisp, ripe, cheerful. Not at Wine Rack.

Tokay Pinot Gris Herrenweg, Zind Humbrecht 1997 16.5 £13–20
So rich and roasted-honeyed that it whips the taste buds into peaks. Is it sweet? No. Is it dry? No way. Other categories refuse to accept it either. Perhaps goat's cheese and fruit are its best pals. Wine Rack only.

Tokay Pinot Gris, Turckheim 1998 15.5 £5–7
It'll age for two or three years and mellow deliciously, but I like its subtle apricot freshness now. A real wine with individuality and soul.

Turckheim Alsace Blanc 1998 13 £5.00
Dry, touch austere. Not at Wine Rack.

Turckheim Gewürztraminer 1998 16 £5–7
Classic, spicy, rich, warm, immediate rosy/lychee/strawberry fruit. Great throat refresher and plate accompanist.

Turckheim Pinot Blanc 1998 14.5 –£5.00

Zind Humbrecht Pinot d'Alsace 1997 16 £7–10
Deliciously impish richness, expensively furnished with decisive acidity, and the gentility of the wine, and its characterful freshness, make it a treat. It will age for a couple more years yet. Wine Rack only.

UNWINS WHITE

Anjou Blanc 1997 11 –£5.00

Ash Ridge Grenache/Viognier 1999 13 –£5.00

Château Vieux Malveyren Monbazillac Domaine Vilate 1990 16.5 £13–20
Magnificently textured, complex, honeyed fruit. A first-class dessert wine, better than many premier cru Sauternes.

Condrieu Guigal 1998 15.5 £13–20
Very delicious if not entirely typical of the breed (Viognier grape – apricots). The finish is dry and nutty.

Corbières Les Producteurs du Mont Tauch 12 –£5.00

Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998 14.5 £7.10
Delicious texture, demure fruit with a very faint echo of earth.

Cuvée Philippe VdP du Comte Tolosan 1999 12.5 –£3.50

Sweet-edged but dry. Strictly a curmudgeon's party wine.

Domaine de Saubagnere Côtes de Gascogne 1998 14.5 ~£5.00
Fresh, delicious, hint of tropicality.

Domaine des Forges Coteaux du Layon-Chaume 1997 16 £7–10
Pineapples, honey, wild strawberries and butterscotch. Complex enough for you? It is for me. To drink with fruit pastry desserts.

Domaine Valette Pouilly-Vinzelles Vieilles Vignes 1997 16 £13–20
Expensive treat and quite remarkably concentrated and rich. Very elegant and untypical.

La Chablisienne Chablis Vieilles Vignes 1997 13 £7–10

Les Trois Herault Les Chais Beaucarois NV 13 ~£3.50

Mâcon Lugny Les Charmes 1998 14 £5–7
Always a decent drop, Chardonnay from this co-op.

Marquis de Beausoleil NV 15.5 £5–7
Delicious blue cheese wine.

Marsanne/Roussanne Frédéric Roger 1999 14.5 ~£5.00
Terrific food wine. Has energy, character and backbone

Muscadet Sur Lie Pierre Brevin 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

Petit Chablis Albert Bichot 1999 12 £5–7
Dull – not quite as ditchwater, that would be unfair, but it isn't a seven quid wine.

Pinot Blanc d'Alsace Cave de Turckheim 1999 14 ~£5.00
Hint of peach to the delicious freshness.

Pouilly-Fumé Les Griottines 1998 10 £7–10

Sancerre Harmonie Oak Aged 1997 12 £13–20
Hugely overpriced.

Sancerre Les Roches Vacheron 1999 13.5 £10–13
Nice texture but eleven quid? No way.

Sancerre Les Romains Vacherons 1999 (rosé) 13.5 £7–10
Very elegant, very expensive, very, very subtle.

St-Véran Domaine des Deux Roches 1999 15.5 £7–10
Superb elegance and lingering fruit. Beautiful white burgundy for the money.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Bordeaux Sauvignon Calvet 1997 12 ~£5.00

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Le Vieux Mas Marsanne Viognier VdP d'Oc 1998 15 £5.00

Les Pierres Blanches Sancerre 1998 12 £7–10
Silly price really for basic fruit.

Meursault, Les Chevaliers, Domaine René Monnier 1996 12 £13–20

Montagny Premier Cru Oak Aged Chardonnay 1997 13.5 £5–7

Old Bush Vines Grenache Blanc 1999 14 £5.00
Unusual dryness and nervous-sided pertness here. Very good fish wine. Not at Wine Rack.

Rivers Meet White Bordeaux 1997 11 £5.00

Teuqirat Côtes de Gascogne 1998 14.5 £5.00
Delicious, crisp, ripe, cheerful.

Turckheim Alsace Blanc 1998 13 £5.00
Dry, touch austere. Not at Wine Rack.

Turckheim Gewürztraminer 1998 16 £5–7
Classic, spicy, rich, warm, immediate rosy/lychee/strawberry fruit. Great throat refresher and plate accompanist.

Turckheim Pinot Blanc 1998 14.5 £5.00

WAITROSE WHITE

Alsace Gewürztraminer 1998, Waitrose 16.5 £5–7
Superb plumpness and vivacity of fruit. Not too spicy but oodles of flavour.

Alsace Pinot Blanc, Paul Blanck 1999 14 £5.00
Deliciously different aperitif – hint of wet wood and nuts

Anjou Blanc Ackerman 1999 13 £3.50
Almost sweet.

Bistro Blanc VdP d'Oc 1999 13.5 £5.00
Oddly bitter on the finish. Expensive for the style.

Bordeaux Blanc Medium Dry, Yvon Mau NV 12 £3.50
Medium it is, then.

Chablis Gaec des Reugnis 1998 14.5 £7–10
Some style here. Muted, compared to Aus or NZ, but attractive

Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos 1996 13 £13–20
A lot of money for a wine which on the sole evidence of the bottle I tasted,

sealed with heaven knows what variation in cork quality, is slightly less than exciting

Château Carsin Bordeaux Blanc Cuvée Prestige 1997 15.5 £7–10
Lovely woody undertone to crisp fresh gooseberries – tangy edge to it.

Château de Caraghuiles Organic Rosé 1999 15.5 £5–7
Superb texture and assured class. If you are a real rosé fan, this is for you. It suits food or mood. Very versatile with food.

Château Filhot Grand Cru Classé Sauternes 1989 13.5 £20+
Too expensive by a lot more than half.

Château Vignal Labrie, Monbazillac 1997 17 £7–10
Most individual and exotic specimen. Has a gorgeous waxy texture and very ripe, complex undertones. Real whack of sweet fruit on the finish.

Clos des Chenoves Blanc 1998 14 £5–7
Interesting. Has some engaging mineral edges.

Domaine de l'Olivette, Corbières 1999 15.5 £5.00
Unusual finish to the wine of nuts and herb bread. Delicious, different, dainty, decisive.

Domaine de Planterieu VdP de Gascogne 1999 15.5 £5.00
Lovely exotic edge (subtle) underpinned by pineapple and pear freshness.

French Connection Viognier VdP d'Oc 1999 15.5 £5.00
The dry apricot fruit is very well picked. It is a smooth, gently rich wine of some class.

Gewürztraminer Wintzenheim Domaine Zind Humbrecht 1998 16.5 £7–10
Wonderful dry spice here! Imperious class and concentration! Limited branches.

Hermitage Le Chevalier de Sterimberg 1997 17.5 £20+
The acme of French arrogance. Has little fruit but mighty dry yet oily-textured richness. Only from Waitrose Direct.

James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999 16 £5.00
Very elegant, subtle, gently fruity, stylish and well priced. Lovely lemon edge as it finishes

L'Enclos Domeque Barrel Fermented Marsanne/ Roussanne VdP d'Oc 1999 16.5 £5.00
What a smashing wine! Has wonderful crispness yet layers of baked fruit flavour and a hint of gelatinous richness as an undertone. Unusual, distinctive, very delicious.

La Cité Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999 14.5 £5.00
Goes nicely ripe melony on the finish.

'Les Fleurs' Chardonnay/ Sauvignon VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999 16 £5–7
What a cheeky brew! Lovely confident richness, almost serious, alongside rivulets of hard fruit freshness.

Maury Vin Doux Naturel NV 14 £3.00
Try it with chocolate.

Merchants Bay Sauvignon/Sémillon 1998 14 £5.00

Mercurey Blanc Château le Hardi 1998 14 £10–13
Interesting. Cellar it for three years and it'll be even more so.

Meursault Louis Jadot 1997 12 £13–20
Will develop, though, and '97 was a decent enough vintage. Give it four years, say?

Montagny 1er Cru Bouchard Père 1998 13 £7–10

Muscadet Sur Lie 'Fief Guerin' 1999 14 £5.00
Has a lovely gripping texture and a nutty edge to the fruit.

Muscat Sec Domaine de Provenquière, VdP d'Oc 1999 16 £5.00
Muscat sec is a difficult beast which often shows two heads but fails to be intimidating. Here there is integration and the two heads, dry honey with crisp freshness, work. A lovely, lovely aperitif.

Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise NV (half-bottle) 16 £5.00
A wonderful blue cheese wine or with fresh fruit.

Pinot Gris Grand Cru Rangen de Thann Clos St-Urbain, Domaine Zind Humbrecht 1996 18.5 £20+
Stunning elegant spiciness and richness here. Extraordinary depths of deliciousness. Only from Waitrose Direct

Pouilly-Fumé Chatelain 1999 12.5 £7–10

Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru Champs Gains 1997 13 £20+

Quincy La Boissière 1999 13 £5–7
Odd chewy finish.

Rosé d'Anjou 1999 13 £5.00
Sweet and loving.

Saint-Aubin Premier Cru Ropiteau 1998 15 £13–20
Delicious, if expensive. Will age extremely well for five or six years and get really incisively Burgundyish.

Sancerre Blanc Domaine Naudet 1999 13 £7–10
Oddly grassily fat edge.

Sancerre Réserve Alfonse Mellot 1998 10 £10–13
Oh come on!! Thirteen quid!!!

Saumur Blanc 'les Andides' Saint-Cyr-en-Bourg 1999 14 £5.00
Interesting oddity. Little charm or concession to fruitiness. But fine with a dozen Colchester natives.

Sauvignon Blanc 'Les Rochers', VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999 13.5 £5.00
Curious fatness yet leanness on the finish.

Sauvignon Bordeaux Calvet 1999 13.5 £5.00
Sealed with a real cork but a so-called conglomerate, so expect variations between bottles even greater than you get with a whole natural cork. (Please. Bring on screw caps.)

Tokay Pinot Gris Vendanges Tardives, Hugel 1990 18 £20+
Butterscotch richness yet calm acidic

complexity. A stunning aperitif wine. Inner Cellar stores.

Top 40 Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999 17 £5–7
Better than many a Meursault, this creamy, woody wine. It has delicacy yet lingering power and real deep class.

Touraine Sauvignon 1999, Waitrose 13.5 –£3.00

Vin Blanc Sec VdT Français NV, Waitrose 12 –£3.50

Winter Hill Syrah Rosé, VdP d'Oc 1999 14 £3.50
Great with food, this toffee and cherries fruited rosé.

Winter Hill VdP d'Oc 1999 15 –£3.50
They add oak chips to this wine to give it fatness which is a bit like getting Kate Moss to drink water to put on weight. In other words, you taste no oak, thank goodness, but you taste a real mean lean Ugni Blanc (the grapes in this bottle). A great shellfish wine here.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Château l'Ermitage Blanc, Costières de Nîmes 1998 16 ~~£5.00~~
Crackingly good peach/apricot/lemon fruit, very subtle, beautifully textured. A confident, very classy wine of wit and style.

Château l'Ermitage Rosé, Costières de Nîmes 1998 15.5 ~~£5.00~~
A superb, dry rosé of warmth and richness. Really effective as a quaffer and a food wine

Château Lacroix Rosé 1999 13 £5–7
I want crispness with my fruit, not out-of-focus cherries and plums.

Château Lacroix Sémillon/Sauvignon 1998 13.5 £5–7
Muddy fruit, not crisply defined. Suitable for rich fish dishes.

Domaine l'Orgeril Réserve Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1997 12 £5–7

Orchid Vale Medium Dry Chardonnay 1998 13 –£5.00

Rhône Valley White, VdP de Vaucluse NV 11 ~~£5.00~~

Sancerre Seduction Vieilles Vignes 1998 12 £10–13
Very expensive and not especially seductive. It is priced, as Sancerre increasingly tends to be, three times more than the fruit justifies

GERMANY

Going down the tubes fast as a mass producer, but not giving up without a fight. All those vineyards, all that fast dying labour which can barely be persuaded to pick the grapes, no wonder the big players in the German wine industry are being squeezed by the changing tastes of UK wine drinkers. It is the single-estate Rieslings which are Germany's unique contribution to world culture (speaking vinously) and they are the greatest white wines in the world: unique, uncopyable, resplendently complex and mineral-tinged, and capable of inducing great happiness.

CWS RED

Devil's Rock Masterpiece Pinot Noir 1999 10 ~£5.00
Distinguished by being the feeblest red wine at the Co-op. Superstores only

ASDA WHITE

Deidesheimer Hofstuck Riesling Kabinett 1997, Asda 11 £5.00

Devil's Rock Riesling Kabinett 1997 14 ~£5.00

Liebfraumilch Gold Seal 1997 13.5 ~£3.50

BOOTHS WHITE

Gau-Bickelheimer Kurfurstenstuck Auslese 1998 13 £5.00
Very mild for an Auslese Well-chilled it's an acceptable aperitif.

Liebfraumilch NV, Booths 13 £3.50

Niersteiner Speigelberg Spatlese 1997 12 ~£5.00

Piesporter Michelsberg NV, Booths 13.5 ~£5.00

Riesling Louis Guntrum 1999 14 ~£5.00
A very pleasant aperitif – even better if cellared for five years.

BUDGENS WHITE

Flonheimer Adelberg Auslese 1997 10 ~£3.50

CWS WHITE

Bend in the River 1998 12.5 ~£5.00
Bit austere (unlike the name and the bottle).

Bereich Bernkastel 1999, Co-op 10 £3.50

Very sweet and straight-in-yer-face.

Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett 1996 16 £5–7
Superb racy, mineralised acids. A dry yet gently honey/melon (ogen) edged wine of great class. Superstores only.

Four Rs 1999, Co-op 12 £5.00
They forgot the fifth R: ah!

Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spatlese 1997 14.5 £5.00
Nice tang to the minerals in the acids, pleasant thwack to the gently honeyed fruit. A most acceptable aperitif. Superstores only.

Kendermans Dry Riesling 1998 13.5 £5.00
Pleasant lemon edge on the finish.

Kirchheimer Schwarzerde Beerenauslese 1998 (half-bottle) 14 £5.00

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Hock NV, Somerfield 14.5 £2.50
One of the great bargains on UK wine shelves. A totally charming aperitif in warm weather or a lush ingredient in a spritzer.

Niersteiner Spiegelberg 1999, Somerfield 11 £3.50
You might try laying it down – for three or four years. Interesting fruit should emerge.

M&S WHITE

Summer Spring Riesling 1999 12 £5.00
Expensive, tart, eccentrically-bottled and rather pathetic – it seems to be begging for attention.

MAJESTIC WHITE

Avelsbacher Hammerstein Riesling QbA 1992 16.5 £5.00
Amazing value: petroleum and textured, ripe honeydew melon fruit. Delicious aperitif.

Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett, Jacobus 1994 13.5 £5.00
Bit monodimensionally sweet on the finish.

Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett Thanisch Muller-Burggrael 1998 13 £7.10
Too young and I'm uncertain as to how well it will age. It has a very uncertain, unMosel-like feel to its sweetness.

Domdechant Werner Riesling Spatlese Halbtrocken 1992 14.5 £5.00
Great aperitif. Delicious value.

Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spatlese 1994 16.5 £5–7
I love the racy acids which flow so purposefully with the rich fruit. At its peak early.

JL Wolf Forster Stiff Riesling Spatlese 1996 14 £5.7
Bare hints of the petroleum classicism of old Pfalz Riesling, but then this is young. Give it eight years and it'll rate eighteen points.

Kaseler Kehrnagel Riesling Kabinett Bert Simon 1990 14 £5.00
Interesting age for a Riesling from Herr Simon. Simple? Not entirely.

Riesling QbA Friedrich-Wilhelm-Gymnasium 1991 14 ~£5.00
Great value thirst quencher, very well chilled, for warm firesides.

Riesling Ruppertsberger 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

Serriger Vogelsang Riesling Auslese (2nd Barrel) 1989 16.5 £5–7
Petroleum, cherries, lemons, limes, hint of pineapple – yet it's not too fruity or remotely sweet. A sipping wine for civilising effects on mood – but not food

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett, Jacobus 1992 16 ~£5.00
Marvellous mineral dryness and mature fruit.

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese, Hauth-Kerpen 1998 15 £5–7
Lush and lissom, lithe and lovely

MORRISONS WHITE

Kallstadter Beerenauslese 1998 (half-bottle) 15 ~£5.00
Lovely honeyed richness which is not OTT. Great with Greek pastries or fresh fruit.

Kendermans Dry Riesling 1999 13 ~£5.00
Brave stab at a brave new German wine world

Urziger Wurzgarten Spatlese 1998 12 £5–7
Sweet, mono-dimensional, touch flatulent.

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese 1997 11 £5–7

ODDBINS WHITE

Durkheimer Fronhof Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslese, Kurt Darting 1998 (50cl) 15.5 £13–20

Lingfelder Bird Label Riesling, Pfalz 1999 13 ~£5.00
Can't quite make up its mind. Is it sweet or dry?

Messmer Burrweiler Riesling Spatlese Trocken, Pfalz 1998 13 £7–10
Bit austere on the tongue.

Ruppertsberger Reiterpfad Scheurebe Beerenauslese, von Buhl 1994 (half-bottle) 17 £20+
Astonishing richness and honeyed grapefruity lushness give it an unusual multi-layered, dry effect in what is a sweet wine. It will age for twenty years, but you can enjoy it now with fruit tarts

Von Buhl Deidesheimer Maushole Spatlese Halbtrocken 1998 14 £7–10
Lay it down for five years.

Von Buhl Forster Pechstein Riesling Kabinett 1998 14 £7–10
Very sweet for a Kabinett. Best to let it lie for a few more years.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spatlese, Mosel Saar Ruwer 1996 16 £7–10
The ultimate Christmas lunch starter wine – with the smoked salmon. The complex acids buttress the rich fruit beautifully. An immensely civilised wine. Top 67 stores.

Oppenheimer Sacktrager Riesling Kabinett, Rheinhessen 1996 12 £5–7

Peter Mertes Dry Riesling 1998 12 £3.50

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Bereich Bernkastel Riesling 1997 12 £3.50

Dr Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese 1995 13 £13–20
Needs another five or six years to really motor. At this price, now, you are wasting your money. It needs time. 10 stores.

Fire Mountain Riesling 1999 13.5 £5.00
Some nice touches to the fruit. Touches, mind. Selected stores.

Hock NV, Sainsbury's 11.5 £3.50

Hock, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 14.5 £3.50
A fantastic value aperitif and summer thirst quencher. Not remotely sweet or austere. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Kendermann Dry Riesling 1999 13 £5.00
Brave stab at a brave new German wine world. Selected stores.

Liebfraumilch, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 14 £3.50
The perfect base for a spritzer or for the honey-dentured crowd who like a touch of honey in their wines. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle

Mosel, Sainsbury's 14 £3.50

Piesporter Michelsberg, Sainsbury's 12 £3.50

Zeltinger Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett 1997 15 £5.00

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Baden Dry NV, Somerfield 13.5 £5.00

Hock NV, Somerfield 14.5 £2.50
One of the great bargains on UK wine shelves. A totally charming aperitif in warm weather or a lush ingredient in a spritzer.

Morio Muskat 1997 15 £3.50
Gamy, spicy, rich yet dry – this is a great aperitif. Limited distribution.

Mosel Riesling Halbtrocken NV 14 £3.50

Niersteiner Spiegelberg 1999, Somerfield 13 £3.50
You might try laying it down – for three or four years. Interesting fruit should emerge.

Rheingau Riesling 1996, Somerfield 14 £5.00
I wouldn't mind a glass of this – as a well-chilled refresher on a honeyed night.

Rheinhessen Auslese 1997, Somerfield 14.5 ~~£5.00~~
Delicious butterscotch/toffee edge to the wine. Would work wonders with fresh fruit and cheese. Limited distribution.

Rudesheimer Rosengarten NV, Somerfield 11.5 ~~£3.50~~
Sweet-edged (of course) but very far from yukky. Limited distribution.

St Johanner Abtey Kabinett NV, Somerfield 14 ~~£3.50~~
Most acceptable, drunk with a bunch of grapes, goat's cheese and bread. Limited distribution.

St Ursula Dry Riesling NV 14 ~~£5.00~~

SPAR WHITE

Grans Fassian Riesling 1995 16 £5–7
The most elegant, most truly classic white wine I've tasted at Spar. It is dry and mineral, deliciously tinged with freshness without tartness, and has a subtle mix of dry honey and crisp apple acidity. It will age with great distinction for several years and develop even more wonderful nuances the riesling grape, uniquely, possesses. A wine with true soul. An uncompromised rebuke to the mass-manufactured feel of other Spar whites.

TESCO WHITE

Cark Erhard Rheingau Riesling 1999 14 ~~£5.00~~
Interesting aperitif here. Has hints of melon, raspberry (on the finish as it fades) and nuts

Devil's Rock Riesling 1998 14 ~~£5.00~~

Fire Mountain Riesling 1997 13.5 ~~£5.00~~

Grans Fassian Trittenheimer Riesling Spatlese 1997 14 £7–10
So young! Cellar it for five to seven years and a 17-point wine will emerge. A Moselle like this needs time to let the acids grow up in the bottle and cut through the richness of the honey/ogen melon fruit.

Kendermans Dry Riesling 1999 13 ~~£5.00~~
Brave stab at a brave new German wine world.

Liebfraumilch, Tesco 12 ~~£3.50~~

Steinweiler Kloster Liebfrauenberg Kabinett, Tesco 14 ~~£5.00~~
Well chilled – what a lovely honeyed aperitif (not too sweet).

Steinweiler Kloster Liebfrauenberg Spatlese, Tesco 13 ~~£5.00~~

Villa Baden Chasselas 1998 12 ~~£5.00~~

THRESHER WHITE

Piesporter Michelsberg QbA 1997 10 ~~£3.50~~

UNWINS WHITE

Fitz Riter Durkheimer Hochbenn Riesling Kabinett 1997 13 £5–7

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Kendermann Dry Riesling 1998 13.5 £5.00
Touch expensive for the style.

WAITROSE WHITE

Devil's Rock Masterpiece, St Ursula 1999 10.5 £5.00
Medium sweet anonymity.

Johannisberger Klaus Riesling Spatlese, Schloss Schonborn 1990 16.5 £5–7
Very ripe wine with lovely incut acids which provide raciness to the richness. Wonderful aperitif.

Kendermann Vineyard Selection Dry Riesling 1998 13.5 £5.00
Brave try.

Liebfraumilch Rheinhessen 1999, Waitrose 14 £3.50
Totally respectable fruit. A charming little aperitif

Piesporter Michelsburg Mosel-Saar-Ruwer 1999, Waitrose 13 £3.50
Good basis for spritzers

Ruppertsberger Dry Riesling Auslese 1996 13 £5.7
Neither fish nor fowl. Though it will accompany the former well.

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 1990 17 £13–20
One of the finest aperitifs in the world. Trouble is, what follows? Only from Waitrose Direct.

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese, JJ Prum 1994 14 £13–20
Chewy, tangy aperitif – but best kept for another twelve years to reach eighteen points.

GREECE

Macedonia seems to produce the most interesting, most soulful wines from this countrified mosaic which manages, with resinated Cretan reds, to produce the filthiest wine on the whole planet. The decent Greek stuff is expensive and purposeful, hugely well suited to robust dishes. Oddbins has some splendid examples.

BOOTHS RED

Vin de Crete Kourtaki 1998 11 £5.00
I have had my worst red-wine moments in Crete. This is not that bad but is not thrilling.

BUDGENS RED

Vin de Crete 1998 12 £3.50
Juicy and simplistic.

KWIK SAVE RED

Mavrodaphne of Patras NV 14.5 £5.00

MORRISONS RED

Mavrodaphne of Patras 14 £5.00

ODDBINS RED

Domaine Katsaros Red, Olympos 1997 17 £13–20
One of the best red wines from Greece I've ever lingered over. Big, rich, spicy, deep and packed with layers of dry fruit. The tannins are awesome.

Gaia Estate Agiorgitiko, Nemea 1998 16 £10–13
Compares with great Rhône and Western Australian reds. Beautiful texture.

Kosta Lazaridis Amethystos Cava, Drama 1995 13 £13–20
Fine Wine Stores only.

Ktima Domaine Mercouri, Peloponnese 1998 16.5 £5–7
One of the most elevating Greek reds I've tasted. Beautiful fulfilling fruit and texture.

Ktima Kyr-Yianni Ramnista, Naoussa 1997 16 £5–7
Totally out of order: a Greek with muscles like a midi red, tannins like a very pricey Barolo and a finish which recalls a great Crozes-Hermitage. Yet for all these metaphors it writes in its own style.

Ktima Kyr-Yianni Syrah, Imathia 1997 18 £7–10
A monumental syrah of such stunning herby richness and power it has few equals either in the Rhône or in the Antipodes. The layers of fruit peel off in delicious tannic frenzy and the finish is like being kissed by a hallucinating angel.

Ktima Kyr-Yianni Yianakahori, Imathia 1997 15.5 £7–10

Ktima Voyatsi 1997 16 £7–10
Astonishingly savoury tannins and chewy texture. Deep, black fruit of style and richness. Fine Wine Stores only

Mavrodaphne of Patras NV (50 cl) 15.5 £5–7

Papantonis Miden Agan, Peloponnese 1997 16 £7–10
Stunning food wine! The ultimate kleftiko red.

Tsantali Metoxi Agiorgitikos 1996 16.5 £7–10
Wonderful multi-layered, lingering lushness. Superb power of fruit and balanced elements.

Tselepos Agiorgitikos, Nemea 1997 15.5 £5–7
Juicy but dry, jammy but joyous!

Tselepos Cabernet Sauvignon, Peloponnese 1996 15.5 £7–10

SAFEWAY RED

Mavrodaphne of Patras NV 14.5 £5.00

SAINSBURY'S RED

Kourtakis Vin de Crete Red 1997 13 £3.50

TESCO RED

Grande Reserve Naoussa 1995 13.5 £5–7
Incredible raging tannins which attack the teeth like piranhas. The fruit is subdued under this austere overlord, but with rich meat dishes this wine would be a triumph. Very raisiny aroma and colour.

Greek Red Wine 1999, Tesco 15 £5.00
A dry, rich, puddingy food wine. Stalky, fruity, not sloppy and overwarm

WAITROSE RED

Vin de Crete Kourtakis 1998 14 £3.50
A sweet-raisin-edged wine of great appeal to chilled food lovers.

WINE CELLAR RED

Hatzimichalis Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16 £7–10
Most individual: rich, dry, herby, warm, complex, multi-layered and full of savoury surprises. An elegant, authoritative Cabernet.

Sillogi Lafazanis Red 1997 13 £5–7

St George Skouras, Nemea 1996 15.5 £5–7

BOOTHS WHITE

Kretikos Vin de Crete Blanc Boutari 1999 — 13 — £5.00

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Kourtakis Retsina NV — 14 — £3.50

ODDBINS WHITE

Amethystos Fume, Drama 1999 — 14 — £7–10
Oddly attractive chewy edge to it, but it is rather expensive.

Amethystos Rosé, Macedonia 1999 — 14 — £5–7
Very thick and rich and great with robust food – you can't say that about many rosés.

Boutari Visanto, Santorini 1993 (50cl) — 16 — £5–7
Unusual pudding wine with hints of nuts, honey, melon. Yet, curiously, it finishes like dry apple skin.

Gerovassiliou White, Epanomi 1998 — 13 — £5–7

Kosta Lazaridis Château Julia Assyrtiko, Adriani 1998 — 13.5 — £5–7

Oenoforos Asprolithi, Patras 1999 — 13 — £5.00
Bit sharp for me.

Spiropoulos White, Mantinia 1998 (organic) — 13 — £5.00

Strofilia Nafsika, Anavissos 1997 — 13.5 — £5–7

Thalassitis Santorini Assyrtiko 1998 — 13.5 — £5–7

Tsantali Ambelonas, Agios Pavlos 1999 — 13.5 — £5–7
Excellent white for take-away taverna squid dishes

Tsantali Chromitsa, Agiorgitikos 1999 — 15 — £5–7
Rich and creamy, slight crème brûlée edge to it. Brilliant with food

Tselepos Mantinia 1998 — 13 — £5.00
Oddly ripe, tarty fruit.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Samos Greek Muscat NV (half-bottle) — 15.5 — £3.50

TESCO WHITE

Greek White Wine 1999, Tesco — 14 — £5.00
Simple, dry fruit with a touch of melon.

Santorini Dry White 1999 — 13.5 — £5.00
Expensive but authentically Atlantean and minerally

UNWINS WHITE

Samos Vin Doux Naturel NV — 15.5 — £5.00
Bargain! Sticky toffee fruit to pour over ice cream.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Hatzimichalis Chardonnay 1998 — 12 — £7–10

Sillogi Lafazanis White 1998 — 12 — £5–7

HUNGARY

Probably hasn't gone as far as it might have, given its early flirtation with flying wine-makers, but the Merlots and Sauvignons (Cabernets and Blancs) can be brilliant. Even the odd Gewürztraminer is turning up, and turning out to be more than drinkable.

ASDA RED

River Route Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15.5 £3.50
Brilliant bargain. Great texture, ripeness and richness. Good dry edge to the finish.

BUDGENS RED

Spice Trail Zweigelt 1997 10 ~£5.00

CWS RED

Hungarian Country Wine NV, Co-op 13 ~£3.50

KWIK SAVE RED

Chapel Hill Merlot 1997 15.5 £3.50

SAFEWAY RED

Chapel Hill Barrique Aged Cabernet Sauvignon, Balaton 1997, Safeway 16 ~£5.00
A bargain whizzbang style cab of substance and dry wit. At most stores.

SPAR RED

Misty Mountain Merlot NV, Spar 13 ~£5.00
Very forward and warmly jammy with slightly mismatched tannins. They protrude from the fruit rather than lying solidly beneath.

TESCO RED

Chapel Hill Barrique Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15 ~£5.00
Nods in the direction of Bordeaux. Smiles in the direction of South Australia. The result is highly drinkable. Not at all stores

Reka Valley Hungarian Merlot, Tesco 13 ~£3.50
Dry but jammy – interesting paradox.

ASDA WHITE

Badger Hill Hungarian Sauvignon 1999 14 £3.50
Very herbaceous and crisp. Great shellfish wine.

Hungarian Medium 12 £3.50
Chardonnay 1999, Asda
Bit too sweet for me.

BOOTHS WHITE

Chapel Hill Oaked 15.5 £3.50
Chardonnay, Balaton
Boglar NV

BUDGENS WHITE

Spice Trail Irsai Oliver/ 13.5 £5.00
Pinot Grigio 1998

CWS WHITE

Chapel Hill Irsai Oliver 14 £3.50
1998
A wine for fish and chips with mushy minted peas.

Hungarian Chardonnay 12 £3.50
1999, Co-op
Lean and a touch mean. Superstores only.

Hungarian White NV, 13.5 £3.50
Co-op

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Castle Ridge Pinot 14 £5.00
Grigio, Neszmely 1999
Very subtle apricot fruit. Good food wine (tuna salad). Limited distribution.

Hungarian Pinot Grigio, 15 £3.50
Tolna Region 1998

Rhine Riesling, Mor 14 £3.50
Region 1997

MORRISONS WHITE

Ideal with Friends 12.5 £3.50
Chardonnay NV
Well, my friends would like a little more zip and more textured melonosity with their Chardonnay.

'M' Ideal with Friends 11 £3.50
Sauvignon Blanc NV
Very grassy and nervous. Choose your friends carefully.

River Duna Pink Pinot 12.5 £5.00
Noir 1998

SAFEWAY WHITE

Hilltop Bianca 1999 14.5 £3.50
(organic)
Charmingly simple and fruity.

Hungarian Chardonnay 13 £3.50
1999, Safeway

Irsai Oliver 1999, Safeway 13 £3.50
Mildly entertaining aperitif style. Dry.

Karolyi Estate Private 13 £5.00
Reserve 1998
Appley, simplistic.

Matra Mountain Oaked 13 £5.00
Chardonnay, Nagyrede
1998, Safeway
Touch boyish.

Matra Mountain 13.5 £5.00
Sauvignon Blanc 1999,
Safeway
Deliciously nervous edge to it. Great refreshing sipping and fish dish compatibility.

Matra Mountain Unoaked 13 £5.00
Pinot Grigio 1998,
Safeway

Nagyrede Oaked Zenit 1998 12 ~£3.50

Riverview Chardonnay 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Strains to make an impact.

Riverview Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Excellent structure and touches of class to the dry fruit.

Tokaji Aszu 5 Puttonyos 1992 (50 cl) 13.5 £7–10
A wine for crème brûlée or summer pudding.

Woodcutter's White, Neszmely 1999 9 ~£3.50
Very cosmetic.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Bin 66 Hilltop Gewürztraminer 1999 14 £5.00
Not like the fat, all flowing Alsatian kind, this is more crisp and modern. Not at all stores.

Hilltop Chardonnay Bin 058 1997 16 ~£5.00
Classy, restrained, dry yet fruity, double-layered, nutty, not remotely overdone or smug. Selected stores

Hungarian Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé NV, Sainsbury's 11 ~£3.50
Not as full of bravura as once it was It's a jejune little thing now, vaguely cherryish in mode.

Zenit Sefir 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
A fish-party wine. Not at all stores.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Castle Ridge Pinot Grigio, Neszmely 1999 14 ~£5.00
Very subtle apricot fruit. Good food wine (tuna salad). Limited distribution.

Castle Ridge Sauvignon Blanc 1999 14 £5.00
Very grassy and finely cut at that. Limited distribution

SPAR WHITE

Misty Mountain Chardonnay NV, Spar 12 ~£5.00
Fruit's shrouded in mist too.

TESCO WHITE

Chapel Hill Pinot Noir Rosé 1998 15 ~£3.50

Emerald Hungarian Sauvignon Blanc 1999 14 £5.00
The bones are poking through here, so use it with smoked salmon. A very attenuated dry wine. Not at all stores.

Hungarian Oaked Chardonnay NV, Tesco 12 ~£5.00
Curious ripe edge to it

Hungarian Oaked Chardonnay Reserve 1999, Tesco 13.5 ~£5.00

Nagyrede Estate Barrel Aged Pinot Grigio/Zenit 1998 16 ~£5.00
Superb little throat charmer! Highly stylised, rich/dry fruit, with a solidly engaging finish. Terrific price for the class. 100 selected stores.

Reka Valley Chardonnay NV, Tesco 12 ~£3.50

Somewhere between ho-hum and basic.

Tokaiji Aszu 1990 16 £7.10
Will age for ten to twelve years (and more) but it will go well with goose liver – which I drank it with. It lacks conventional sweetness but has a rich acidic vein like marmalade and lime. It has been bought in specially for Christmas at the top 85 stores, so please be aware that stocks may be limited.

THRESHER WHITE

AK 28 Sauvignon Blanc 1998 14.5 £5.00
Brilliant shellfish wine. Not at Wine Rack.

Hilltop Gewürztraminer 1997 15.5 £5.00
A deft, gently spicy Gewürz with floods of fresh acidity to bolster the rich fruit. It's a lovely aperitif – quite individual and special. Not at Wine Rack or Bottoms Up

The Unpronounceable Grape 1997 12 £3.50
Doesn't roll off the tongue.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

AK 28 Sauvignon Blanc 1998 14.5 £5.00
Brilliant shellfish wine. Not at Wine Rack.

Hilltop Gewürztraminer 1997 15.5 £5.00
A deft, gently spicy Gewürz with floods of fresh acidity to bolster the rich fruit. It's a lovely aperitif – quite individual and special.

The Unpronounceable Grape 1997 12 £3.50
Doesn't roll off the tongue.

WAITROSE WHITE

Deer Leap Dry White 1999 15.5 £3.50
Superbly fresh and crisp. Quite wonderful for the money.

Deer Leap Gewürztraminer, Mor 1999 15.5 £5.00
Think Sauvignon with spice. Not the usual rich roseate ferment but a clean, classy, very cool customer.

Deer Leap Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5.00
Seriously demands of Kiwi Sauvignon: 'Why do you cost three times this to be as keen as a sushi-chef's knife edge?'

Matra Springs 1999 14 £3.50
A fun party wine.

Matra Springs Dry White 1999 15 £3.50
Fantastic screw-capped, taint free fruit! It's dry, fresh, lemony and incisive.

ITALY

The lira/pound sterling relationship and the waning interest in wine drinking among younger Italians means that for UK importers this is the promised land. Italy is desperate to export, has some tremendously fecund vineyards (especially in the south and Sicily) and flying wine-makers are all over the place Of course, Barolo and Barbaresco remain its prized red jewels, but the silkiest of these are pricey and in meagre supply. Italy, like Italians, doesn't exist. It is merely a political and geographical expression. We must consider Italian wine, from its individual regions, in the same way.

ASDA RED

Barolo Veglio Angelo 1996 14 £7–10
Good tannins here. Not much liquorice, though.

Chianti 1999, Asda 12 £3.50

Chianti Classico 1998, Asda 13.5 £5.00

Chianti Classico Riserva 1997, Asda 14 £5–7
Lovely savoury edge to the tannins as it finishes.

La Vis Trentino Oak Aged Merlot 1998, Asda 14 £5.00
Very bright and rich and great with pasta.

Organic Valpolicella 1999 13.5 £5.00
Very juicy and freshly cherried.

Puccini Chianti Reserva 1997 14 £5.00
The juicy style.

Sicilian Rosso NV, Asda 13.5 £3.50

Trulli Primitivo del Salento 1999 14 £5.00
Very ripe. Needs chicken Dhansak.

Tuscan Red 1999, Asda 13.5 £3.50
Bit rough. Very ready.

Valpolicella Classico San Ciriaco 1998 15 £5–7
Hugely funky. Wonderful! Lovely dry edge to jam. Typical Italian food/quaffing wine.

Valpolicella NV, Asda 13 £3.50

BOOTHS RED

A Mano Primitivo Puglia 1999 15.5 £5–7
Like putting your nose in an old ashtray, much used, much neglected by the pub's charlady. The fruit is vivid and it will develop well in bottle. It drinks well now with rich food.

Amarone Classico Brigaldara 1994 15 £13–20

Archidamo Pervini Primitivo di Manduria 1997 15.5 £5–7
Spreads like jam but stays just this side of adulthood. Great with roasts and casseroles.

Barocco Rosso del Salento 1998 15 £3.50

Colli di Sasso Toscana 1998 14 –£5.00
Unusually forward for a Tuscan red: jam and judicious tannins which take time to bite.

I Promessa Sangiovese Puglia 1999 13.5 –£5.00
Good for pasta parties

La Piazza Rosso 1999 (Sicily) 15 £3.50
Delicious raspberry and blackcurrant fruit with a hint of Sicilian sunshine and olives.

La Prendina Falcone Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £10–13
Rather expensively tailored (and priced) and lacks real tannic oomph but it has a marvellous soft, giving texture.

Salice Salento Vallone 1997 14 –£5.00

Valpolicella Classico Superiore, Viviani 1996 15.5 £7–10
And superior it is, showing the dry side of plums and blackberries with a hint of savoury cherry.

Valpolicella Classico, Viviani 1997 12 £5–7

Valpolicella Ripasso Viviani 1994 14 £7–10

Vigna Flaminio, Brindisi Rosso 1996 15 £5–7
Deliciously rich and ripe with controlled earthy undertones. A terrific quaffing specimen.

BUDGENS RED

Canaletto Merlot 1999 14.5 –£5.00
Lovely leather textured cherries/plum fruit. Warm, generous, great with food.

Fontella Chianti 1999 13 –£3.50
Juicy and ripe.

La Mura Rosso del Salento 1999 14 –£3.50
A food wine. Don't try it with anything else. Pasta with bacon, garlic and sun-dried tomatoes will do nicely. The pruney earthiness of the wine will suit this dish down to the ground.

Merlot del Veneto Rocca NV 9 –£5.00
So spineless it can't walk.

CWS RED

Barolo, Terre del Barolo 1995 11 £7–10
Thin, touch emaciated. Superstores only

Barrelaia NV, Co-op 13 –£5.00
Fades on the fruit, this juicy construct.

IGT Merlot NV, Co-op 11 –£3.50
So juicy!

Il Padrino Rosso Sicilia 1999 15 –£5.00
Delicious! Dee-licious – it's simple, entertaining, cheering, warm and very fruity. But it does not overstay its welcome. Superstores only

Melini Chianti 1998 14 £5.00
Exceedingly juicy but it does possess some tannic stealth. I would think many Co-op palates lap it up like milk. Superstores only.

Puglia Primitivo Sangiovese 1999, Co-op 16 £5.00
Wonderfully joyously fruity and fresh. Combines a medley of fruit and fresh acidity in compelling combination with perfect, soft tannins.

Trulli Primitivo del Salento 1998 14.5 £5.00
Juicily ripe plums and peaches, a hint of cherry and wild strawberry – so a lot of sugar but it's not sweet. Good, soft tannins, too. Overall, a wine for spicy dishes.

Valpolicella NV, Co-op 12 £3.50

KWIK SAVE RED

Chianti Classico Conti Serristori 1998, Somerfield 13.5 £5–7
Sweet fruit, dry and earthy tannins. Should be a quid cheaper.

Merlot Venezie 1997 14 £3.50

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998, Somerfield 14 £5.00
Touch of spice is nice.

Solicella, VdT Umbria NV 15 £3.50

Terra Rossa Sangiovese 1997 16 £3.50
Fantastic ripeness, clammy plums sweating richly all over the tannins, and the result is a gorgeous dry wine of great class.

Valpolicella Venier NV 13 £3.50

M&S RED

Amarone Classico della Valpolicella 1995 15.5 £10–13
The treat for Christmas lunch : wild raspberries, figs, liquorice and earthy tannins

Barbera Piemonte 1998 16 £5.00
Wonderful vigour and flushed-with-youth freshness. Has huge drinkability along with food friendliness. The plump cherries in the wine are perfect.

Barolo 1996 13.5 £13–20
Not a full blooded, liquorice-steeped Barolo, but not a bad stab. Fifteen quid though. That's hard to swallow.

Canfera 1997 14.5 £7–10
Exuberance and richness. Very soft, integrated tannins.

Chianti Single Estate 1998 13 £5.00
Real denture stripper.

Italian Table Red Wine NV (1 litre) 12 £3.50
Heavily earthy. Price band reflects the 75 cl equivalent.

Reggiano Rosso Single Estate 1999 10 £5.00
A liquefied lollipop. Maybe you should freeze it (or make it into a sorbet at least)

Rosso di Puglia 1998 13 £3.50
Very dry and rustic.

Rosso Toscano 1997 16 £5–7
Joyous, gluggable and heart warming. Perfect maturity and bite to the wine. The fruit is rich and fresh, the tannins in fine fettle.

Sangiovese di Puglia 1999 15.5 £5.00
Superb! Better than so many Chiantis using the same sangiovese grape. It has tenacious tannins

Valpolicella Classico Single Estate 1999 13 £5.00
Sour dry cherries.

Villa Cafagio Chianti Classico 1998 13.5 £7–10
I've always liked the tannins in this wine but I do want fruit too. Here the fruit is lean.

Vino Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1997 13.5 £7–10
Expensive, dry, earthy and herby and highly amusing – except the price tag.

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 1995 13.5 £7–10

MAJESTIC RED

Aglianico del Vulture 1997 18 £7–10
A real mineral-tinged treat. The elegance, the concentrated ripeness, the typical Vulture richness. A beautiful, confident, stunning mouthful.

Amarone Valpolicella Tedeschi 1996 18 £10–13
One of the more perfect specimens of this extravagant breed. Lively, serious, hugely amusing, concentrated and unites the joyous elements of wine (sugar, acid, tannin) into something original and very fine. Liquorice, prunes and hedgerows. They're all there

Barbera d'Asti Ca'Bianca 1997 13.5 £5–7
Too juicy on the finish to rate higher.

Centine Toscanna, Banfi 1997 16 £5–7
Utterly compellingly quaffable richness and controlled jamminess. Has loads of freshness, good scaffolded tannins, and a richly applied outer coat of savoury fruit.

Chianti Il Tasso 1998 14 £3.00

Chianti Rufina Basciano 1997 15.5 £5.7

Colli di Sasso Banfi 1998 14 £5.00
Nice juice here and very good tannins

Conero Conti Cortesi 1997 14.5 £5–7
More dry juice from the Italians. Very sweet but rescued by its tannins.

Dogajolo Toscana 1998 16 £5–7
A most individualistic approach to Tuscany, via a long winding road of juicy soft-fruit hedgerows and fine acidic hard fruit orchards. Lovely finish to it. Hugely quaffable.

Dolcetto d'Alba de Forville 1998 16 £5–7
The spiky tannins stud the rich fruit like spicy currants in a chocolate cake.

Merlot del Veneto Marchesini 1998 14.5 £3.50

Merloti Marche Marchesini 1999 10 £3.50
Total fruit juice. It's that scrawny.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Barone Cornacchia 1998 11 £5.00
Very juicy and super-ripe.

Primitivo del Salento Antonini 1998 16 £5.00
Invigorating rush of sweet fruit which then goes delightfully lush, then tannic and gripping. A pungent food wine.

Primitivo del Salento Sigillo Primo 1998 16 ~£5.00
Big, rich, rousing, soft, cockle-warming (yet young and fresh), cheeky and utterly drinkable.

Recioto Tedeschi 1996 (50cl) 15 £5–7
Sweet and pruney, it defies classification in terms of food. Curry? Pasta with tomatoes and some rich sausage? Casserole with prunes? It does need food (it is cloyingly sweet edged) and it's worth experiencing. My inclination is to try a salad of sweet fruit and grilled vegetables.

Rosso di Sicilia La Toricella 1998 15 ~£3.50
Marvellous value for money: incisive, stylishly well cut and has a firm, mildly rich finish of roast nuts and dry fruit.

Salice del Salento Riserva 1997 15.5 £5–7
Delicious prune and liquorice richness, dry earthiness and brilliant food-matching possibilities.

Sangiovese Marchesini 1998 13.5 ~£3.50
Very juicy. Great with Indian food (rates 15.5 then).

Sassaiolo Rosso Piceno 1997 14.5 £5.00

Valpolicella Classico, Santepietre 1998 12 ~£5.00

Valpolicella Classico Superiore 1996 17 £7–10
Quite superb individuality here: spice, cherries, leather, sweet blackberries, soft tannins, and a hint of prune. Terrific value for the ultimate Italian dinner party.

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 1996 14.5 £5–7
Extremely arid to finish in spite of some charm and sweet-natured fruit.

MORRISONS RED

Casa di Monzi Merlot 1999 13 ~£5.00
Juicy and super-ripe.

Chianti Uggiano 1997 12 ~£5.00
Ragged, rustic, dry.

Montepulciano Uggiano 1997 12 ~£5.00
Has a whisky tang to it of considerable oddity.

Puglia Primitivo 1999 13 ~£5.00
Odd clash of dryness and sweet ripeness.

Valpolicella NV 12 ~£3.50

Vino Rosso di Puglia NV 10 ~£3.50

ODDBINS RED

Barbera d'Asti Suri di Mu, Icardi 1998 15.5 £7–10
Sweet plummy edge. Delicious food wine.

Barbera d'Asti 'Tabarin', Icardi 1999 14 £5–7
Sweet and soft.

Ca'Vergana Barbera d'Asti 1997 14.5 ~£5.00
Very ripe and juicy.

Castello Le Leccia Chianti Classico 1998 16 £7–10
A most unusually richly tannic Chianti of charm and concentrated effortlessness. Outstanding of its type.

Cecchi La Gavina 17 £7–10
Cabernet Sauvignon, Toscana 1997
Grandly gripping and multi-faceted Wonderful layers of figs, plums, spices and tannins.

Dolcetto d'Alba 16.5 £7–10
'Rousori', Icardi 1999
Lovely tannins! Oh the tannins!

Felline 'Albarello' Rosso del Salento 1997 16 £7–10
Dry yet rich and resoundingly full of soft fruit flavours. Immensely food-friendly.

Feudi di San Gregorio Rubrato, Irpinia 1997 16 £5–7
Biscuity quality to the texture and even a suggestion of some baked currants in it Terrific food wine.

Frescobaldi Campo Ai Sassi, Rosso di Montalcino 1998 14 £7–10
Has a very ripe fresh edge to the finish.

Gagliardo Dolcetto d'Alba 1999 13.5 £7–10
Bit too obvious and juicy for me.

Il Padrino Rosso Sicilia 1999 15 –£5.00
Delicious drinkability here – and it has great tannins to give it real backbone.

Il Tarocco Chianti Classico 1997 15 £7–10
A personality clash, resolved deliciously, between firm tannins and soft, jammy fruit

Masi Modello delle Venezie 1998 15.5 –£5.00
Lovely jammy fruit which is so soft it oozes rather than flows

Musella Rosso di Verona 1996 15.5 £7–10
Superbly juicy yet has great savoury tannins.

Nolita Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998 16 –£5.00
Biting tannins combine with immensely chewy fruit to make a real crunch mouthful of fruit.

Primitivo di Manduria, Felline 1998 15.5 £7–10
Has blackcurrants and plums and herbs and tannins. Really delicious.

Rosso di Spicca Le Velette 1999 15.5 £5–7
Lovely richness of purpose. Brilliantly food friendly.

San Crispino Primitivo del Salento 1999 16 –£5.00
Striking richness and plump, ripe fruit. Engaging, elastic, exhilarating

San Crispino Sangiovese di Romagna Superiore 1996 14 –£5.00
Juicy and ripe, typically Italianate and gutsy. Good fresh grip to it.

San Fereolo Dolcetto di Dogliani 1998 14 £7–10
Gushes over the taste buds leaving behind touches of tannins and plums.

Scaranto, Colli Euganei 1997 16 £5–7
Warm and generous hint of jam to the rich fruit and a lovely soft finish.

Tre Uve NV 14 –£5.00
Very jammy and ripe. Great with spicy Indian food.

Tre Uve NV 14.5 –£5.00
Simple fresh cherry/plum fruit with a delicious hint of tannin, savoury and

pureed, on the finish. Good to quaff. Excellent with pastas.

Tre Uve Ultima NV 15 5 £5–7
Chewiness to it, thanks to some tannins, and the fruit is alive to every possibility of the liaison – the result is a marvellously textured wine.

SAFEWAY RED

Amarone delle Valpolicella Classico, Tedeschi 1995 16 5 £10–13
Expensive treat: prunes, liquorice, almonds, spicy cherries, and consummate smoothness yet alert tannins make for a lovely Christmas lunch wine of utter downability and food matchability.

Barolo Castello Riserva 1993 14 £13–20

Farnio Rosso Piceno 1998 15 –£5 00

Inycon Merlot 1999 (Sicily) 13 5 –£5 00
Very sweet and full and not typical but good with rich food.

Sentiero NV 13 –£3 50
Juicy with striking tannins.

Serina Primitivo, Tarantino, Puglia 1996 15 –£5.00

Tenuta San Vito 1998 (organic) 14 £5–7
Certainly multi-layered but it goes up and down like a roller coaster. Most individual.

Terriero Sangiovese di Puglia 1998 14.5 –£5.00

Villa Mottura Squinzano 1997 11 –£5 00

SAINSBURY'S RED

A Mano Primitivo Puglia 1999 15.5 £5 7
Like putting your nose in an old ashtray, much used, much neglected by the pub's charlady. The fruit is vivid and it will develop well in bottle. It drinks well now with rich food.

Allora Primitivo 1998 15 –£5.00

Amano Primitivo 1999 15 5 £5–7
Juicy, jammy, joyous – all fruit, all dancing, all-singing, all over the taste buds like balsam. You can't spit it out. 100 stores

Barolo Cantine Rocca Ripalta 1995 15 £10–13
A liquorice-tinged, palate-expanding wine of classic Barolo brusqueness yet charm. That is to say it seems almost arid at first, after the tearing perfume the tannins, dissolving in the mouth, create. Not at all stores

Bright Brothers Roman Vines Negroamaro Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 16 5 –£5.00
Dry, rich, incisive, savoury warm and very with it. Excellent tannins and tightly woven fruit. Most stores.

Caramia Salice Salentino Riserva 1997 16 5 £5–7
Now here the raisiny, semi-sweet, oxidative style is hemmed in by great tannins. The wine pulsates to good purpose, parading cherries, plums and blackberries.

Classic Selection Chianti Classico 1997, Sainsbury's 15 5 £5–7

Emporio Nero d'Avola Merlot 1999 14 £5.00
Very sweet, clinging and gravy-rich. A

wine for marinating beef and for marinating the tongues of larks and the young. Not at all stores.

Inycon Syrah 1999 16.5 —£5.00
Vibrant, saucy, sexy, beautifully harnessed tannins to the compressed fruit. A terrific fiver's worth of Sicilian style syrah.

L'Arco Cabernet Franc, Friuli 1998 14 —£5.00
Serious, almost glum cabernet franc with typical slate-and-charcoal dry fruit with a layering of black cherry. Most stores.

Lambrusco Rosso, Sainsbury's 10 —£3.50

Merlot delle Venezie, Connubio 1998 16.5 —£5.00
Quite brilliant. Has superbly plump, plummy texture, vivid tannins, soft leathery and blackcurrant fruit, and a flourishing finish. Great stuff. Most stores.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1999, Sainsbury's 14 —£5.00
Very jammy and super ripe but the tannins give it nobility. Most stores.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Connubio 1997 15.5 —£5.00

Morellino di Scansano Riserva 1997 18 £7–10
A wonderful food wine of great energy and elongated, fruity richness. Warmly textured and extremely deep – like an old knitted cardigan worn by Isaiah Berlin. 100 stores.

Natio Organic Chianti, Cecchi 1998 13.5 £5–7
Claims to be made in the interests of mankind. What about womankind? Ah, that's Italians for you. Selected stores

Nero d'Avola IGT Sicilia, Connubio 1998 15.5 —£5.00

Rosso di Provincia di Verona NV, Sainsbury's 15 —£3.50

Sangiovese di Toscana, Cecchi 1999 13.5 —£5.00
Sweet natured and dry-finishing. Most stores.

Serrano Rosso Conero 1999 15.5 —£5.00
Very thick and linctus-textured, ripely fruity but not OTT (by a whisker). Very full and rich, it needs food. Not at all stores.

Sicilia Red, Sainsbury's 15 —£3.50
Bargain quaffing and food wine. Spice, cherries, plums, earth, sticky textured and toffeed richness and an urgency to please.

Stowells Montepulciano del Molise NV (3 litre box) 12 —£5.00
The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Teuzzo Chianti Classico, Cecchi 1997 16 £5–7
One of the most gripping Chiantis at this price I've tasted of this vintage. Lovely Tuscan terracotta briskness, dryness and class of fruit. Most stores.

The Full Montepulciano NV 13 —£5.00
A good pun but a bit too full for me. A sweet, raisiny, overripe, nakedly all-embracing wine which would be great with curries. Not at all stores.

Valpantena Ripasso Valpolicella, Connubio 1997 14 £5–7
Sweet fruit, dry and earthy tannins. Should be a quid cheaper.

Valpolicella NV, Sainsbury's 12.5 ~£3.50

Valpolicella, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 12 ~£3.50
Bit arid and uninspiring as it finishes. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Via Nova Primitivo 1998 15 ~£5.00
Brilliant spicy food wine: sweet and dry, very fat and fit. Not at all stores

Zagara Nero d'Avola Sangiovese 1999 14 ~£5.00
A ripe, raisiny, almost oxidised style it suits Indian food admirably. Most stores

SOMERFIELD RED

Bright Brothers Roman Vines Negroamaro Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 ~£5.00
Gorgeously sticky yet not overbaked or overspiced. Has piles of flavour buttressed by excellent tannins. Flaunts blackcurrants, earth, plums and strawberries

Cabernet Sauvignon delle Venezie 1999, Somerfield 14 ~£5.00
Calm and collected, rich yet subtle, very smooth tannins

Caramia Primitivo Barrique 1998 14 £5–7
Sweet primitivo-graped curry wine. But six quid? Buy it for the BYOB tandoori house.

Chianti Classico Conti Serristori 1998, Somerfield 13.5 £5–7

D'Istinto Sangiovese Merlot 1998 (Sicily) 14 ~£5.00
One of the best examples of this curate's egg of a wine range. Has fruit, tannins and acidity in good order.

L'Arco Cabernet Franc, Friuli 1998 14 ~£5.00
Serious, almost glum Cabernet Franc with typical slate-and-charcoal dry fruit with a layering of black cherry.

Marano Amarone della Valpolicella 1996 13.5 £10–13
I find thirteen quid for this cherry-ripe, figgy-ish specimen a bit rich. Of course, it's hugely individual and all-enveloping and would be marvellous with a festive fowl stuffed with fruit and spices, but that price, unlike the wine, is just too hard to swallow. Selected stores.

Mimosa Maremma Sangiovese 1998 15 ~£5.00
Pure vinified hedgerows and herb gardens. Brilliant with risottos and mushroom dishes

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998, Somerfield 14 ~£5.00
Touch of spice is nice.

Riparosso Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998 13 ~£5.00
Sweet and earthy. Great with pasta.

Terrale, Primitivo di Púglia 1998, Somerfield 15 ~£5.00
Brilliant, vivacious, cheering, warm, herby, sunny, rich, delicious

Tre Uve Ultima, Madonna dei Miracoli 1998 15 £7–10

A construct of Montepulciano, Sangiovese and Primitivo, aged in oak. A deep rich wine with a touch of tarry sweetness on the finish. Selected stores.

Trulli Chardonnay del Salento 1999 15 ~£5.00
Elegant, thoughtful, precocious, solid from nose to throat

Trulli Primitivo Salento 1998 14.5 ~£5.00
Juicily ripe plums and peaches, a hint of cherry and wild strawberry – so a lot of sugar but it's not sweet. Good, soft tannins, too. Overall, a wine for spicy dishes.

Valpolicella Classico Vigneti Casterna 1997 15.5 ~£5.00
Sweet cherries and a touch of earth. Delicious pasta plonk. Selected stores.

SPAR RED

Barolo 'Costa di Bussia' 1994 16 £13–20
Lot of money, a lot of wine. Has a lovely soft figgy richness, never too sweet, plus coffee and warmly spiced cherries. Gorgeous tannins fit perfectly.

Chianti Chiantigiane 1997, Spar 12 ~£5.00
Juicy and jammy with a touch of tannic gravy.

Chianti Classico Le Fioraie 1995 11 £7–10
Far too expensive to be sensibly paired with the curried food it requires. It's raisiny and getting near retirement.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1999, Spar 14 ~£5.00
Raspberry and plum, earth and sunshine. Not a bad recipe to set beside a risotto.

Pasta Red NV, Spar (1 litre) 11 ~£3.50
Been in a fight has it? Seems a bit shaky and bruised to me. Price band is for the 75cl equivalent.

Riva Red NV, Spar 13.5 ~£3.50
Goes a bit flat on the finish. Has some sparky tannins, though.

TESCO RED

Barbera d'Asti Calissano 1997 15.5 ~£5.00

Barolo Vigna dei Pola 1995 14 £13–20
Wine Advisor Stores only.

Chianti 1998, Tesco 13 ~£3.50

L'Arco Cabernet Franc, Friuli 1998 14 ~£5.00
Serious, almost glum cabernet franc with typical slate-and-charcoal dry fruit with a layering of black cherry.

Melini Chianti 1998 14 ~£5.00
Exceedingly juicy but it does possess some tannic stealth. I would think many Tesco palates lap it up like milk.

Merlot del Piave NV, Tesco 11 ~£5.00
Very sullen. Needs to be blended with an overfruity Cape Merlot to achieve fire in its belly – and presence in the drinker's

Moncaro Sangiovese 1999 13 ~£3.50
A juicy wine to go with balti dishes

Monte d'Abro Montepulciano Abruzzo 1999 14 ~£5.00

Juicy and earthy. Good with curries.

Pendulum Zinfandel 1999 15.5 £5.00
Ignore the Marbella gold packaging Concentrate on the lovely soft plummuly plump fruit. Most stores.

Pinot Noir del Veneto NV, Tesco 11 £5.00
Not hugely overkeen. Very austere fruit with little Pinot typicity nor a single eccentric trait.

Sicilian Red NV, Tesco 14 £3.50
The perfect curry companion and it's rated on that basis. The fruit is sweet and sticky.

Taruso Ripassato Valpolicella Valpentena 1997 16.5 £5.70
Wild strawberry, cherries, liquorice almonds and sweet lushness overall. A wonderfully fruity wine of immense charm. It also has smooth tannins which will permit it to be aged for five or six years and become even lovelier (and perhaps reach 18/19 points). A superb food wine with such plumpness and depth it overrides the most robust food. Top 80 stores

Terra Viva Vino da Tavola Organic Red 15.5 £5.00

Trulli Primitivo Salento 1998 14.5 £5.00
Juicily ripe plums and peaches, a hint of cherry and wild strawberry – so a lot of sugar but it's not sweet. Good, soft tannins, too. Overall, a wine for spicy dishes.

Valpolicella Classico 1999, Tesco 13 £5.00
Cherry juiciness

Villa Pigna Rosso Piceno 1998 14 £5.00

THRESHER RED

Amarone della Valpolicella Via Nova 1997 18 £7–10
Superb modern Amarone with classic overtones of liquorice, fig, raspberry, blackcurrant, herbs, jam, tannins and rich acids. The texture is thick and balsamic and lingering. Yet, withal, this is not, in spite of 14.5% of alcohol, a bruising experience. It is very elegant and polished.

Amarone della Valpolicella Zenato 1995 17 £13–20
Liquorice, figs, ripe cherries and damsons, and marvellous tannins. Even so, I'd cellar it for five or six years and see it reach, perhaps, perfection at twenty points. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Barbera Bricco del Bosco 1997 14 £5–7
Juicy and ripe and very lap-uppable. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Barolo Terre da Vino 1996 13 £10–13
Lot of money. Bitter ending, too.

Brunello di Montalcino, Casanova di Neri 1994 15.5 £20+
Pulsates with ripeness and jammy immediacy but then the gorgeous tannins strike – and wham! we have a serious mouthful on our hands (and for that mixed metaphor, where this wine is concerned, I make no apologies).

Cecchi Sangiovese 1998 14.5 £5.00

Chianti Classico Riserva Rocca Guicciadia, Ricasoli 1997 16.5 £7–10
Superb Tuscan masterwork of juicy

plums and cherries and exciting tannins. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Chianti Grati Poggio Galiga, Banda Blu 1997 13 £7–10
Seems to give up the ghost before it reaches the finishing line. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Formulae Sangiovese di Toscana, Ricasoli 1998 13.5 £5–7
Juicy with earthy tannins. Good with food.

Graticciaia Puglia 1994 17 £13–20
The smoothest, most integrated, most completely sophisticated Puglian red I've tasted. Concentrated and hugely classy, it shows local grapes a world class exhibition of richness and wit. Wine Rack only.

La Bella Figura Merlot Cabernet 1998 15.5 £5.00
Terrific pace and style here. Great tannins, good texture.

Merlot Corvina Fiordaliso 1998 13.5 £5.00
Light cherries.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Umani Ronchi 1999 14 £5.00
A jammy/earthy pasta party wine.

Montepulciano Selva Torta 1998 15.5 £5–7
Energy and loads of fruit to carry it with. Good tannins and texture and a flourish on the finish.

Rosso di Montalcino, Casanova di Neri 1998 15 £10–13
Great tannins (youthful yet) and rich, deep fruit.

Salice Salento Vallone 1997 13.5 £5–7
Very juicy and ripe but marvellous with spicy food

Trulli Primitivo 1997 14 £5.00
A soupy, very ripe wine, with tightly textured tannins underneath. It needs food – lots of it.

Valpolicella Classico Superiore Zenato 1997 16 £5.00
Marvellously fluent speaker of intense, soft, rich, harmonious Italian

Valpolicella Classico Zenato 1997 16.5 £5.00
Valpol? Sixteen points? Something odd here. Yes, it's Signor Zenato who's the oddity. He turns Valpolicella into a world class mouthful. At a fiver, this is a steal. One of the best reds on these shelves

Valpolicella Ripassa Superiore Zenato 1997 17 £7–10
Casual brilliance and effortlessly integrated fruity richness and textured, delicate tannined complexity. A wonderful wine. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Vigna Flaminio, Brindisi Rosso 1996 15 £5–7
Deliciously rich and ripe with controlled earthy undertones. A terrific quaffing specimen. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

UNWINS RED

Barocco Rosso del Salento 1999 13 £5.00
Very very juicy and thickly spread

Chianti Classico Reserva Villa Antinori 1997 14 £7–10

A very fresh Chianti with good tannins.

Ciro Classico 1998 14 £5.00
Sweet raisins and dry tannins
Tandoori chicken step forward!

La Mura Rosso Casa Girelli 1999 14 £5.00
Raisiny and ripe. Terrific wine for Indian food.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Miglianico 1997 15.5 £5.00

Primitivo Merum 1998 13 £5.00
So juicy!

Villa Cafaggio Chianti Classico 1997 13 £5.7
Too jammy.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Amarone della Valpolicella Via Nova 1997 18 £7–10
Superb modern Amarone with classic overtones of liquorice, fig, raspberry, blackcurrant, herbs, jam, tannins and rich acids. The texture is thick and balsamic and lingering. Yet, withal, this is not, in spite of 14.5% of alcohol, a bruising experience. It is very elegant and polished.

Barolo Terre da Vino 1996 13 £10–13
Lot of money. Bitter ending, too

Brunello di Montalcino, Casanova di Neri 1994 15.5 £20+
Pulsates with ripeness and jammy immediacy but then the gorgeous tannins strike and wham! we have a serious mouthful on our hands (and for that mixed metaphor, where this wine is concerned, I make no apologies).

Cecchi Sangiovese 1998 14.5 £5.00

Formulae Sangiovese di Toscana, Ricasoli 1998 13.5 £5–7
Juicy with earthy tannins. Good with food

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Terrific pace and style here. Great tannins, good texture.

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Light cherries.

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A jammy/earthy pasta party wine

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Energy and loads of fruit to carry it with. Good tannins and texture and a flourish on the finish.

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Great tannins (youthful yet) and rich, deep fruit.

Salice Salento Vallone 1997 13.5 £5–7
Very juicy and ripe but marvellous with spicy food.

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A soupy, very ripe wine, with tightly textured tannins underneath. It needs food – lots of it

Valpolicella Classico Superiore Zenato 1997 16 £5.00
Marvellously fluent speaker of intense, soft, rich, harmonious Italian.

Valpolicella Classico Zenato 1997 16.5 ~£5.00
Valpol? Sixteen points? Something odd here. Yes, it's Signor Zenato who's the oddity. He turns Valpolicella into a world class mouthful. At a fiver, this is a steal. One of the best reds on these shelves

WAITROSE RED

Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Riserva 1990 13 £20+
Too expensive. Only from Waitrose Direct

Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Vigneti Casterna 1995 (50cl) 16 £7–10
Lot of loot, lot of wine. Spicy, rich, smooth, touch exotic and feral. Delicious for the solo hedonist.

Barolo Terre da Vino 1996 13 £10–13
Lot of money. Bitter ending, too. Not at all stores.

Bonarda Sentito, Oltrepo Pavese 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Solid Italianate fruit here of great food matching qualities

Brunello di Montalcino Tenuta Nova 1994 14 £13–20
Very savoury and ripely rich. Only from Waitrose Direct

Emporio Barrel Aged Syrah 1998 (Sicilia) 16.5 £5–7
Remarkably toothsome and rich, dry, savoury and deep. Terrific delivery of eloquent fruit.

Mezzomondo Negroamaro 1999 16 £5.00
Brilliant value food wine with rich, herby fruit and delicious spicy tannins Has a first class texture and concentration of flavours.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Umani Ronchi 1998 16 ~£5.00
Gorgeous tannins and rich red fruit.

Nero d'Avola Syrah, Firriato 1998 14 ~£5.00
Very juicy but has a meaty underedge, so it's a terrific pasta plonk.

Pendulum Zinfandel 1999 15.5 £5.00
Ignore the Marbella gold packaging. Concentrate on the lovely soft plummily plump fruit.

Sangiovese Marche, Waitrose 13 ~£3.50
Very juicy.

Summit Sangiovese di Maremma 1997 16 £7–10
Immensely stylish, Tuscan terroir-riddled richness.

Tenute Marchese Antinori Chianti Classico 1996 16 £10–13
Extremely civilised. Not at all stores.

Tenute Marchese Antinori Chianti Classico Riserva 1997 14.5 £10–13
Civilised baked-earth fruit, gently tannic and fruitily teasing. Not at all stores.

Tenute Marchesi Chianti Classico Riserva 1996 16 £10–13
Perhaps it's *too* smooth. Blink and it slithers down and you merely feel warm inside. A stunning Chianti of hauteur and class.

Teroldego Rotaliano, Ca'Vit 1999 14 ~£5.00
Warm, juicy, gently apple-edged with a strong savoury plum overtone.

Terra Viva Merlot del Veneto 1999 (organic) 14 ~£5.00
Very dry but good with food.

Vigna Alta Merlot & Cabernet Basilicata 1998 14.5 ~£5.00
Superb multi layered richness which proceeds in deliciously textured layers as it courses over the taste buds Compelling wine.

WINE CELLAR RED

D'Istinto Sangiovese Merlot 1998 (Sicily) 14 ~£5.00
One of the best examples of this curate's egg of a wine range. Has fruit, tannins and acidity in good order.

ASDA WHITE

La Vis Pinot Grigio 1999, Asda 13.5 ~£5.00
Not remotely harsh, as some p.g.s are.

Lambrusco Bianco NV, Asda 13.5 ~£3.50

Lambrusco Rosato NV, Asda 13 £2.50

Oaked Soave 1998, Asda 14 ~£5.00

Soave NV, Asda 14 ~£3.50

BOOTHS WHITE

La Piazza Bianco 1999 (Sicily) 13.5 ~£3.50
Exceedingly fruity and a touch sweet.

Le Rime Pinot Grigio/ Chardonnay 1999 13 ~£5.00
Edging towards the dull

Sentito Cortese DOC Oltrepo Pavese 1998 13.5 ~£5.00

Soave Classico Pra 1999 15.5 £5–7
Shows how elegant, thrusting, complex and entertaining Soave can be.

Vin Suspo Rosado Capezza 1999 13 £5–7

BUDGENS WHITE

Canaletto Chardonnay 1999 13 ~£5.00
Bright and lemony.

Marc Xero Chardonnay NV 15 ~£5.00
Very rich fruit, smoky and food-friendly. Has delicious taint free screwcap.

Pinot Grigio delle Venezie 1999 14 ~£5.00
Lovely little Italian fish wine.

CWS WHITE

Marc Xero Chardonnay 1998 14 ~£5.00
The fruit is respectable, the bottle whacky, the idea delicious.

Puglia Chardonnay Bombino 1999, Co-op 12 ~£5.00
A little soapy – but no opera, alas

Trulli Chardonnay 1998 16 ~£5.00
Delicate progression of richness yet delicacy courses over the taste buds here, leaving one refreshed and panting for more. It would be easy to

quaff this wine too quickly and miss its abundant charms as it trips, with variegated steps, down the throat.

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Bianco di Puglia 1998, Somerfield 13.5 ~£3.50

Bright Brothers Roman Vines Sicilian Barrel-fermented Chardonnay 1999 16 ~£5.00
Delicious sticky toffee fruit which is not over the top. The hint of wood nicely counterpoints the strawberries, limes and melons. (And peach? Yes, I do believe peach too.)

Pinot Grigio/ Chardonnay Venezie 1997 15 ~£3.50

Sicilian White 1999, Somerfield 15.5 ~£3.50
Brilliant! One of Italy's and Somerfield's top bargain whites: soft, creamy yet crisp to finish, nutty and a touch elegant.

Soave 1998, Somerfield 14.5 ~£3.50
Crisp, vaguely nutty, a nervous edge to it classic Italian fish wine.

Villa Pani Frascati Superiore 1997 13 £3.50

Vino da Tavola Bianco NV, Somerfield 14 ~£3.50
Bargain fruit here. Subtle melon with a crisp undertone.

M&S WHITE

Frascati Superiore 1999 12 ~£5.00

Orvieto Single Estate 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Interesting edge to it. Only an edge though

Pinot Grigio/Garganega 1999 12 ~£5.00

Soave Superiore 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Superb fresh edge to it, like under-ripe melon. Has a nutty finish and a chewy texture. A delicious shellfish and fish wine.

Villa Masera Organic Wine 1999 11 ~£5.00

MAJESTIC WHITE

Bianco di Sicilia La Toricella 1998 15 ~£3.50
Very dry with a finish which hints at vanilla. Terrific fish wine.

Ca'Visco Soave Classico Superiore Coffele 1998 16 £5.7
Intense concentration of texture and rich, serious fruit. Very elegant, very striking.

Castello di Tassarolo Gavi 1998 15.5 £7.10
Delicious, delicate, daring – it flaunts its differences and is a refreshing change from Chardonnay with its exciting sour/dryness and crisp melon spiciness.

Chardonnay di Puglia, Pasqua NV 14.5 ~£3.50
Simply quaffable. Dry yet fruity and charmingly refreshing.

Chardonnay Pinot Grigio Pasqua 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Needs spaghetti a la vongole (not with tomato sauce) to make an impression.

Frascati Superiore, Selciatella 1998 15.5 ~£5.00

Garganega Garda DOC Vigne Alte Fratelli Zeni 1999 14.5 £5.00
Lovely melon and peach fruit.

Late Picked Gavi di Gavi Villa Lanata 1999 14 £7–10
Unusual aperitif for a hot summer's day.

Monte Tenda Vigneto Soave Classico Tedeschi 1998 13 ~£5.00

Orvieto Classico Secco Vigneto Mortaro 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
A lesson in how not to design a wine label but this will only deter some drinkers who will fail to reach the lovely fruit in the bottle

Piemonte Chardonnay de Forville 1998 15.5 £5–7

Pinot Grigio Alois Lageder 1998 16 £7–10
Astonishing level of nutty, peachy fruit. Beautifully supple and textured.

Pinot Grigio San Angelo Vineyard, Banfi 1999 10 £5–7
Very cosmetic and Barbie-dollish.

Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Coste del Molino 1999 16 ~£5.00
Outstanding Italian richness, quaffability and food friendliness. Goes from ripe lemon to under-ripe melon Or is it the other way around? Ah well . . . drink it!

MORRISONS WHITE

Casa de Monzi Chardonnay delle Venezie 1999 13 ~£5.00
Very ripe and off-dry.

Casa de Monzi Rosato 1999 13 ~£5.00
Dry, touch austere.

Chardonnay di Puglia NV 13 ~£3.50

Di Notte Pinot Grigio 1999 14 ~£5.00
Pleasant apricot sensations.

Inycon Chardonnay 1999 (Sicily) 15.5 ~£5.00
Delicious rich melon undertones, slightly smoky. But it finishes clean and fresh and very wholesome.

Ponte Vecchio Oaked Soave 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

Soave NV 13 ~£3.50

Verdicchio di Jesi Classico 1999 15.5 ~£3.50
A bargain! Lovely teasing fruit, dry, faintly peachy and nutty. Real elegance here.

ODDBINS WHITE

Arneis Roero Malvira 1999 13.5 £5–7

Cantine Gemma Moscato, Piemonte 1999 13 ~£5.00
Sweet riches for sweet-hearted geriatrics.

Chiarlo Nivole Moscato d'Asti NV (half-bottle) 15 ~£5.00
Only 5.5% alcohol, but lovely with fresh fruit and goat's cheese.

Coffele Soave Classico 14.5 £5–7
1999
Nutty and fresh. Delicious fish wine.

Feudi di San Gregorio 13 £5–7
Falanghina, Sannio 1999

Gorgo Bianco di Custoza 13 –£5.00
1999

Histonium Chardonnay, 15 –£5.00
Abruzzo 1998
Elegant, crisp and modern

Icardi Cortese 'Balera' 14 £5–7
Piemonte 1999
An interesting aperitif, gently rich and polished.

Il Padrino Greganico/ 14 –£5.00
Chardonnay, Sicily 1999
Clever combination of creamy fruit and lurking acids. Overall, rather plump.

Pra Soave Classico 14 £5–7
Superiore 1999
Very elegant

Tenuta le Velette 13.5 £5–7
'Lunato' Orvieto Classico
Superiore 1999
Expensive for the style.

Trulli Chardonnay 16 –£5.00
Salento 1998
Delicate progression of richness yet delicacy courses over the taste buds here, leaving one refreshed and panting for more. It would be easy to quaff this wine too quickly and miss its abundant charms as it trips, with variegated steps, down the throat

Villa Felici Orvieto 12 £5–7
Classico Amabile 1999
Bit on the sweet side yet insufficient to interest puds

Villa Felici 'Velette' 12 –£5.00
Orvieto Classico Secco
1999
Very sullen and under ripe.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Arcadia Veronese Rosato 13.5 –£5.00
1999
Some agreeable nutty edginess.

Ca'Bianca Gavi 1998 14.5 £5–7
Dry, gripping, concentrated, charming. Selected stores.

Cortechiara Soave 13.5 –£5.00
Classico 1999
Odd finale.

Inycon Chardonnay 1999 13.5 –£5.00
(Sicily)
Delicious rich melon undertones, slightly smoky. But it finishes clean and fresh and very wholesome.

Organic Soave 1999, 12 –£5.00
Safeway
Bit too lean for me. Selected stores.

Pinot Grigio Alto Adige 16 £5–7
1998
Superbly couth texture, welcoming and civil, and a lovely dry yet warm finish. Very classy. Selected stores.

Sentiero NV 15.5 –£3.50
Totally charming: nutty, demurely rich, gently ripe and agreeably deep without being smothering.

Sicilian Dry White 1998, 13.5 –£3.50
Safeway (1.5 litre)
The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Terre Cortese Verdicchio 14 –£5.00
dei Castelli di Jesi 1999

Great nuttiness and chewy edged fruit. Very dry.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Bianco di Provincia di Verona NV, Sainsbury's 14 £3.50

Cecchi Tuscan White NV 13.5 £5.00

Classic Selection Frascati Superiore 1998, Sainsbury's 13.5 £5–7
Selected stores

Connubio Pinot Grigio delle Venezie 1999 14.5 ~£5.00
Classic minerals and nuts. A terrific Italian fish wine. Works like a dream with spaghetti a la vongole and squid dishes. Selected stores

Enofriulia Pinot Grigio Collio 1998 16 £5–7
Extremely refined, yet purposefully rich and well balanced. Lovely apricot edge to it. Selected stores.

Inycon Chardonnay 1999 (Sicily) 13.5 ~£5.00
Delicious rich melon undertones, slightly smoky. But it finishes clean and fresh and very wholesome. Not at all stores.

Lambrusco dell'Emilia Bianco, Sainsbury's 12 £5.00

Lambrusco Rosato, Sainsbury's 13 ~£3.50

Lambrusco Secco, Sainsbury's 11 ~£3.50

Piave Organic Pinot Grigio 1999 16 ~£5.00
A deliciously compressed wine of dry peachiness and gentle nuttiness.
Extremely chic and well tailored. Most stores.

Pinot Bianco delle Venezie 1999, Sainsbury 14 ~£5.00
Great lemonic value. Has a pert brightness to it. Most stores.

Sartori Organic Soave 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
A clean and fruity Soave of medium-level excitement. Most stores.

Sicilian White, Sainsbury's 13.5 ~£3.50

Soave, Sainsbury's 13.5 ~£3.50

Soave, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 13 ~£3.50
A solid Soave with the typically nutty credentials of the region. Good with fish and fish barbecues. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico 1999, Sainsbury 14.5 ~£5.00
Very crisp, almost sushi knife sharp. Most stores

Villa Bianchi Verdicchio 1999 13 ~£5.00
Intensely dry. Not at all stores

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Bright Brothers Greganico Chardonnay 1999 (Sicily) 13.5 ~£5.00
If it was £2.99 it would rate fifteen

Bright Brothers Roman Vines Sicilian Barrel-fermented Chardonnay 1999 16 ~£5.00
Delicious sticky-toffee fruit which is

not over the top. The hint of wood nicely counterpoints the strawberries, limes and melons. (And peach? Yes, I do believe peach too)

Chardonnay delle Venezie 1998, Somerfield 13.5 ~£5.00
Getting a touch expensive, touching four quid. Drinkable, though.

D'Istinto Trebbiano Insolia 1998 10 ~£3.50

L'Arco Chardonnay 1998 16 ~£5.00
Oh so delicate and delicious! Lovely fruit here.

Marc Xero Chardonnay 1998 14 ~£5.00
Odd name, curious bottle, but the fruit's four square melon and lemon.

Sicilian White 1999, Somerfield 15.5 ~£3.50
Brilliant! One of Italy's and Somerfield's top bargain whites: soft, creamy yet crisp to finish, nutty and a touch elegant.

Soave 1998, Somerfield 14.5 ~£3.50
Crisp, vaguely nutty, a nervous edge to it – classic Italian fish wine.

Vino da Tavola Bianco NV, Somerfield 14 ~£3.50
Bargain fruit here. Subtle melon with a crisp undertone

SPAR WHITE

Pasta White NV, Spar (1 litre) 13 ~£3.50
Bit bony to accompany pasta, I would have thought. Price band is the 75cl equivalent.

Riva White NV, Spar 14.5 ~£3.50
Bargain white with pleasantly soft fruit, nothing harsh, and sympathetic acids

TESCO WHITE

Antinori Orvieto Classico Secco 1999 13 ~£5.00

Asti NV, Tesco 13 ~£5.00

Elegant Crisp White 1999, Tesco 13.5 ~£5.00
Seems to me, at a fiver, a tiny bit lacking in character.

Frascati 1999, Tesco 14 ~£3.50
Hint of lemon peel, touch of chewy melon. Direct, uncomplicated, refreshing. Fantastic price.

La Gioiosa Pinot Grigio 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Slightly chunky in style. Suits fish dishes

Orvieto Classico Abbocato 1999, Tesco 13.5 ~£5.00
Fat, mellow melon fruit. The sweet edge is for apprentice drinkers or occasional sippers.

Soave Classico 1998, Tesco 14.5 ~£5.00
A deliciously crisp and biting wine with a super nutty finish. Needs food, though, to really demonstrate its qualities.

Trulli Dry Muscat 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Aperitif style of muscat, dry and nervous.

Verdicchio Classico 1999, Tesco 14 ~£5.00
Lovely nutty finish

Villa del Borgo Pinot Grigio 1999 14 ~£5.00
Good apricot edge to the steely fruit.

THRESHER WHITE

Falerio Pilastri Saladini 1999 15.5 £5.00
Has a lovely chewy edge and remarkable subtle, crisp fruit. Underfruited? Not a bit of it. It's classy.

La Bella Figura Chardonnay/Pinot Grigio 1999 14.5 £5.00
Delicious lime and coconut fruit.

Marc Xero Chardonnay NV 15 £5.00
Very rich fruit, smoky and food friendly. Has delicious taint free screwcap.

Pinot Grigio Fiordaliso 1999 14.5 £5.00
Intensely lemony and fairly memorable.

Pinot Grigio Terrazze della Luna 1999 14 £5–7
Touch expensive, but clean and crisp and curiously elegant. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Selva Torta Verdicchio 1999 14 £5–7
Very smooth and accomplished.

Soave Classico Zenato 1999 16.5 £5.00
The classiest Soave on the planet: rich, controlled, stylishly acidic, beautifully textured, very finely wrought and terribly inexpensive.

Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Verbacco 1999 15.5 £5.00
A delicious Verdicchio of some class and precision. Has a nervous edge typical of the breed, and lovely nutty undertones. Not at Wine Rack.

UNWINS WHITE

Carato Barrique Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5–7

Chardonnay Mezzo Mondo 1998 14 £5.00
Good thick, rich fruit.

Moscato d'Asti Araldica 1998 10 £5.00
Hugely sweet. For the honey-dentured crew it rates 20.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Falerio Pilastri Saladini 1998 13.5 £5.00

Pinot Grigio Fiordaliso 1998 13.5 £4.00
Italian fish wine: dry.

Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Verbacco 1999 15.5 £5.00
A delicious Verdicchio of some class and precision. Has a nervous edge typical of the breed, and lovely nutty undertones.

WAITROSE WHITE

Catarratto Chardonnay Firriato 1999 (Sicily) 16 £5.00
Splendid underpriced gooseberry, lemon and melon fruited wine classily assembled and so elegant it almost defies belief.

Frascati Superiore Tenuta delle Marmorelle 1999 15.5 £5.00
Quite superbly clean Frascati and great style. Crisp and very satisfying.

Lugana Villa Flora 1999 16.5 £5–7
Utterly lovely compressed gooseberries, pears and melon (under-

ripe) with a hint of spice and a wonderful clean, crisp finish.

Mezzo Mondo 14 £5.00
Chardonnay 1998
Good thick, rich fruit.

Pinot Grigio Alto Adige 14.5 £5.75
San Michele-Appiano
1999
Gentle apricot, touch of almond, delicious crisp, clean fruit.

Verdicchio dei Castelli 16 £5.00
Jesi, Moncaro 1999
One of the more delicious of the breed, an extended, aromatic, very keen, nutty wine of huge quaffability and fish dish friendliness. Superb.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Monte Tenda Soave 1998 12 £5.00

LEBANON

Only Château Musar is widely known and from being, twenty years ago, the world's greatest red wine under a fiver made under fire, I find the wine has become less gripping (yet it's more expensive).

BOOTHS RED

Hochar Red 1995 10 £5.7
Raisins and cranberry juice. Good for very hot curries but little else.

UNWINS RED

Château Musar 1994 10 £10–13
So sour, sweet and overpriced it makes you weep for the wine it once was.

MEXICO

L A Cetto, in Baja California, remains the most notable producer. As a nation it prefers beer, drugs and football to wine, so it will need to be encouraged to capitalise on its obvious charms as a potential producer of compelling bottles.

MORRISONS RED

L A Cetto Zinfandel 1998 10 ~£5.00
Far too sweet!

SAFEWAY RED

L A Cetto Petite Sirah 16 ~£5.00
1997
Hugely individual and dry – fantastically alert tannins An exceptional wine. At most stores.

TESCO RED

Mexican Cabernet 13 ~£5.00
Sauvignon 1999, Tesco
Dry and stalky. Very peppery (green).

WAITROSE RED

L A Cetto Petite Syrah 16 ~£5.00
1997
Coffee and tobacco, juice and earth – what a palate-prickling recipe for sheer pleasure-giving vinosity.

TESCO WHITE

Mexican Chardonnay 15 ~£5.00
1999, Tesco
A superb spicy food wine. Most stores.

MONTENEGRO

The lands of the once Yugoslavian Federation contain some of the most beautiful vineyards in the world, but beauty of site is not a guarantee of beauty of finished wine.

SAFEWAY RED

Monte Cheval Vranac 10 £5.00
1994
To be collected for its label – not its fruit.

MOROCCO

Interesting, very interesting. Capable of some dazzlingly rich reds. Supermarket interest is vaguely increasing in this country's vineyards, and the potential is enormous.

MORRISONS RED

Le Chameau Grenache 11 £3.50
Cinsault NV

NEW ZEALAND

Blame the grass. No grass, no cows. No cows, no dairy industry. No dairy industry, no cheap second-hand stainless-steel equipment and no know-how and technology going for a song to anyone who grows grapes and wants to make wine. No wonder the white Sauvignons from Marlborough used to smell of fresh-cut lawn. But the Merlots and Cabernets (but not some of those horribly jammy Pinots) from the other regions, especially Hawkes Bay, are also gutsy and interesting. There are exemplary growers in Nelson (like the Finns with their world-class Chardonnay from their Neudorf vineyards), Gisborne and the Auckland area.

ASDA RED

Montana Cabernet Merlot 1998 16 £5–7

Spreads, or perhaps oozes is a better word, slowly over the taste buds with great rich fruit.

Deliciously rich tannins, gently savoury, allied to beautifully warm fruit

BUDGENS RED

Corbans White Label Dry Red NV 14 –£5.00

Very ripe and raucous. It really does deafen the tongue and so it needs the balancing charms of a plate of bangers and mash with roasted garlic gravy.

Helderberg Pinotage 1998 15 –£5.00

Marvellous fluency and spice here. Perfect with mild Indian food. Great to take to that friendly Tandoori BYOB joint.

Montana Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1999 15 £5–7

CWS RED

Terrace View Cabernet Merlot 1997 16 –£5.00

Yes, it's difficult and a touch grouchy, but these personality traits (from the peppery Cab and the vegetal Merlot) make it a terrific, dry food wine of some class. Fantastic price for such quality of fruit.

M&S RED

Kaituna Hills Cabernet Merlot 1998 13 £5–7

Kaituna Hills Reserve Cabernet Merlot 1998 15.5 £7.10

Deliciously direct and warm. Real depth to it, yet finesse too. The dry

vegetal Cabernet married to the richer, leatherier Merlot make for a very harmonious union

ODDBINS RED

Delegat's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Hawkes Bay 1998 15.5 £7–10
Distinguished and not delicate. Has fine tannins and firm blackcurrant depth.

Montana Fairhall Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Marlborough 1996 13 £10–13

SAFEWAY RED

Alpha Domus Merlot/Cabernet 1998 15 £7–10
Silky fruit rudely interrupted by down-to-earth tannins. Great! 70 stores.

Delegat's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Barrique Matured 1998 15.5 £7–10
Soft and savoury, sweet yet dry. 70 stores.

Ninth Island Pinot Noir, Tasmania 1999 11 £7–10
Not like real Pinot. A pale juicy shadow.

Villa Maria Cellar Selection Cabernet/Merlot, Hawkes Bay 1997 14 £7–10
Very juicy for Michelle. This winemaker is usually more subtle. Is she in love? With an Aussie? 70 stores.

SAINSBURY'S RED

Shingle Peak Pinot Noir 1999 13 £5–7
Falls short of fruit at the end, although, curiously, the tannins are intact. 135 stores

TESCO RED

Babich Winemaker's Reserve Syrah 1998 15 £7–10
Dry style of Syrah, not Aussie, more Rhone-like, but, overall, it's its own creature. Needs a few hours of opening to gather its wits. Selected stores.

Montana Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998 16 £5–7
A deep, rich, dark chocolate and raspberry/blackcurrant construct of fine tannins and finish. 85 stores.

Montana Reserve Merlot 1998 16.5 £7–10
A superb mouthful of richness with gorgeous woody undertones – the fruit, though, is firmly in command and offers a great texture and a tightly woven finish of power, substance and great style. An impressively compact Merlot of dryness and class. Nine quid well spent here.

Montana Reserve Pinot Noir 1998 12 £7–10
Almost good. The aroma is pleasant, straining to be fruity and rich, but the fruit is not a tenner's worth by a long chalk.

New Zealand Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Tesco 13.5 £5.00

Waimanu Red 1998 13 £5.00

THRESHER RED

Awatea Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1997 13.5 £13–20
Very disappointingly juicy and obvious for this price.

Church Road Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998 15 £7–10
The tannins get there in the end, finishing off some engaging, spicy and generous fruit.

Felton Road Pinot Noir, Otago 1998 13.5 £13–20
Terrific Pinot aroma of wild raspberry and even a very subtle suggestion of truffle but disappoints thereafter. If you blend it with the Palliser Estate Pinot you get a 16.5 point wine and I recommend this to any well heeled Pinot lover looking for really interesting, concentrated, aromatic Pinot. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Martinborough Pinot Noir 1998 13.5 £13–20
Good firm texture and decent tannins.

Montana Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 1999 15 £5–7
Good rich Cabernet pepperiness and the usual clichéd leather from the Merlot.

Montana Reserve Merlot 1998 16.5 £7–10
A superb mouthful of rich fruit with gorgeous woody undertones – the fruit, though, is firmly in command and offers a great texture and a tightly woven finish of power, substance and great style. An impressively compact Merlot of dryness and class. Nine quid well spent here.

Palliser Pinot Noir 1998 14 £10–13
Lovely texture and hint of classic wild strawberry. Might do better if it was aged for two or three years more. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Sacred Hill Basket Press Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £7–10
Juicy and rounded and stylistically between Bordeaux and McLaren Vale. The plumpness of the soft fruit is its theme. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Te Mata Estate Cabernet Merlot 1998 16.5 £7–10
Superb texture and subtle tensions between the grape varieties. This is as it should be in a fine wine which this is, for the drinker is guaranteed plot, character, wit and a stunning climax. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Timara Cabernet/Merlot 1998 14 £5.00
Respectable rather than striking but with food it'll rate much higher (in the mouth)

UNWINS RED

Rippon Pinot Noir 1998 10 £13–20
Rippoff more like.

Sacred Hill Basket Press Merlot/Cabernet, Hawkes Bay 1996 14 £7–10
Juicy yet dry. Too much money, though.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Awatea Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1997 13.5 £13–20
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Church Road Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998 15 £7–10
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Timara Cabernet/Merlot 1998 14 £5.00
Respectable rather than striking but with food it'll rate much higher (in the mouth).

WAITROSE RED

Grove Mill Marlborough Pinot Noir 1998 11 £10–13
Smells okay – don't like what follows (for twelve quid!). Not at all stores.

Jackson Estate Marlborough Pinot Noir 1998 15 £10–13
Good aroma and texture.

Montana Cabernet Merlot 1999 15 £5–7
Delicious nutty and grassy overtone to leather and blackcurrants.

Unison Selection, Hawkes Bay 1998 13.5 £13–20
Absurd price for the juice on offer.

ASDA WHITE

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5–7
Supremely drinkable and charming. Sauvignon as comfort wine: soft, ripe, cool, not tart or too dry as many Sauvignons. Delicious.

Nobilo Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £5–7
The best Nobilo I've tasted. Fruity with a hint of custard cream.

BOOTHS WHITE

Jackson Estate Riesling 1998 13.5 £5–7

Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £7–10
Such a good vineyard for some years now and the '99 is typically ripe and rich.

Vavasour Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £7–10
Better, by far, if cellared for eighteen months or so. It will concentrate better then

BUDGENS WHITE

Corbans Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5.00
Lovely mineralised, crisp and precise, food friendly acids. A class act.

CWS WHITE

Explorer's Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Co-op 16 £5–7
Very dry and a touch schoolmasterly in this respect but its purity of intention is flawless.

Fat Cat Chardonnay 1998 14 £5.00
And very fat it is – indeed, it's positively obese with folds of rich, fleshy, sunburnt fruit. Needs food to stay drinkable over a long period. Exceedingly juicy but it does possess some rich stealth. I would think many Co-op palates lap it up like milk.

Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £5–7
Deliciously compressed gooseberries, a hint of nuts and grass, and a lovely chewy edge. A gently nervous wine, possibly feline in character, and it bristles rather than soothes.

M&S WHITE

Kaituna Blue Sauvignon Semillon 1999 11 £5.00

Kaituna Hills Chardonnay 1999 15 £5–7
Some agreeable richness rising to the surface here

Kaituna Hills Reserve Chardonnay 1999 14.5 £7–10
Chewy richness here.

Kaituna Hills Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 1999 14 £7–10
Expensive companion to oysters.

Kaituna Hills Sauvignon Blanc 1999 12.5 £5–7
The herbaceousness bites back.

MAJESTIC WHITE

Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £7–10
Such a good vineyard for some years now and the '99 is typically ripe and rich.

Marlborough Gold Chardonnay 1998 13 £5–7

Marlborough Gold Sauvignon 1999 14.5 £5–7
Very grassy and ripe – as if buttercups, daisies and grass are herbal elements. Overall, a thick, ripe wine of no elegance but great with food.

Oyster Bay Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5–7
Immense elegance and spread-easy fruit which stretches itself languorously over the taste buds, exposing layers of delicious fruit and acids.

Oyster Bay Sauvignon 1999 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous! Controlled grassiness and herby richness. A handsomely tailored specimen of some class.

MORRISONS WHITE

Cooks Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999 13 £5.00
Bit saline on the finish. Might be all right with shellfish.

Montana Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999 15.5 £5–7
Very jolly and lemon/melon/raspberry fruited.

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7

Grassy and a touch green but superb with shellfish.

ODDBINS WHITE

Church Road Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Gorgeous price, true, but then so is the fruit. It has great smoky flavour and texture.

Dashwood Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5–7
Superb ripe gooseberries, lemon and a faraway echo of melon. Superb texture.

Hawkesbridge 'Willowbank Vineyard' Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999 15.5 £5–7
Very ripe and progressive. Not stately, this progression, but very entertaining.

Hunter's Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £7–10
Expressive and elegant.

Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £7–10
Such a good vineyard for some years now and the '99 is typically ripe and rich

McDonald Church Road Chardonnay, Hawkes Bay 1998 16 £7–10
Stylish and finely wrought with a lingering creamy richness on the finish – almost yoghurty.

Villa Maria Reserve 'Clifford Bay' Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999 16.5 £7–10
Grassy aroma leads to a richness and ripeness on the finish.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Delegat's Reserve Chardonnay, Barrel Fermented 1998 14.5 £7–10
Very chewy. Great with scallop and crab dishes. 77 stores.

Grove Mill Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £7–10
Superb clean fruit, compressed gooseberries and minerals.

Montana Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5–7
Warm and deep. Great for complex fish and poultry.

Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £7–10
Exceptional style of fruit where the depth remains dry, retains complexity, finishes with rich promise. Top 60 stores

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Deliciously citrus, hint of fresh mown lawn, earth and warm fruit – all with a crisp finish. Very stylish stuff.

Oyster Bay Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999 16.5 £5–7
Immense elegance and spread-easy fruit which stretches itself languorously over the taste buds, exposing layers of delicious fruit and acids. Top 145 stores.

Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £5–7
Superb rich grassy fruit which is wildly inaustere and quaffable. Very classy and fine. Not at all stores.

Villa Maria Reserve Wairau Valley Sauvignon Blanc 1999 17 £7–10

The tastiest Sauvignon in the store and the most expensive. But by gum, it motors smoothly and excitingly.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Cooks Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1998 13.5 £5.00

Grove Mill Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £7–10
Superb clean fruit, compressed gooseberries and minerals.

Millton New Zealand Organic Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5–7
Falls a bit short on the finish – it fades just as it seems about to say something interesting. 50 stores.

Montana 'B' Brancott Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1998 16 £10–13
Severely elegant and classy. 20 stores.

Montana Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Compelling style here of great class. Combines an impish directness of freshness with a suggestion of rich maturity. Selected stores.

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1998 16 £5–7
A rich vintage – fewer cold nights to build up acids – has resulted in Marlborough's Sauvignons for '98 being fatter than normal, but there is good balancing acidity. A very elegant wine.

Shingle Peak Chardonnay, Marlborough 1998 16.5 £5–7
Superb richness and depth of gentle smoky melon fruit. Really stylish and fine. 52 selected stores

Shingle Peak Pinot Gris, Marlborough 1999 16.5 £5–7
A superb specimen of an underrated grape. It offers apricots, pineapple, a hint of raspberry and gentle lemonosity. A triumph of a fruity yet elegant specimen. 135 selected stores

Shingle Peak Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1998 16 £5–7
Gorgeous concentration of fruit here, with a lovely zippy finish. 123 selected stores.

Stoneleigh Vineyard Chardonnay, Marlborough 1997 15.5 £5–7

The Sanctuary Chardonnay, Marlborough 1997 16 £5–7
Gorgeous, luscious, full of finesse yet flavoursome and exhibits both polish and depth. How can Chablis compete with it? Selected stores

The Sanctuary Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Very grassy and greengage-fruited. Crisp, clean, fresh, very dry – a terrific fish wine. Not at all stores

Villa Maria East Coast Chardonnay 1998 14 £5–7
Very untypical freshness. Needs to age a year. Selected stores.

Villa Maria Private Bin Sauvignon, Marlborough 1998 17 £5–7
Back to the form of a few years back when it was the least grassy style of NZ Sauvignon yet the most elegant.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Coopers Creek Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999 15.5 £7.10
Wonderful energy to the wine which is compacted gooseberries and a hint of pineapple and lime.

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Sancerre? Knocks it into a cocked hat at this money. Great elegance and elongated fruit here.

TESCO WHITE

Azure Bay Chardonnay/ Semillon 1999 13 –£5.00
It commences work with a biting freshness, then goes a bit bruised, blatant and over-ripe on the finish

Cooks Chardonnay, Gisborne 1998 13 £5–7

Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £7–10
Such a good vineyard for some years now and the '99 is typically ripe and rich. Selected stores.

Lawsons Dry Hills Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £7–10
Immensely classy – the Sauvignon coats the taste buds like delicate emulsion: tense, dry, mineralised, and very delicious. 330 selected stores.

Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1999 17 £7–10
Intensely classy and enormously creamy and rich without being too ripe and obvious. A provocative blend of smoky melon and fine acids. Has elegance, elongation and ease of effort.

Montana Riesling 1999 16 –£5.00
A beautifully opulent Riesling with great texture and subtle acidity. The theme is warm, well-spoken, mannerly and polite and the finish has flair. A delicious mouthful.

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Deliciously citrus, hint of fresh mown lawn, earth and warm fruit – all with a crisp finish. Very stylish stuff. Not at all stores.

New Zealand Dry White, Tesco 13.5 –£5.00

New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc 1998, Tesco 13.5 –£5.00
Not typically Kiwi or typical Sauvignon blanc.

Stoneleigh Chardonnay 1997 15.5 £5–7

THRESHER WHITE

Azure Bay Sauvignon/ Semillon 1999 13.5 –£5.00
Green wine, blue bottle.

Babich Pinot Gris, Marlborough 1999 16 £5–7
Interesting complexity here as the apricot fruit deepens, then goes crisp and chewy, then spreads itself to reveal nuts and white peaches. Wine Rack only.

Church Road Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Gorgeous price, true, but then so is the fruit. It has great smoky flavour and texture.

Church Road Reserve Chardonnay 1998 17 £10–13
Such extreme elegance and controlled

fruitiness make the taste buds weep with pleasure. Marvellous texture and big finish. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Craggy Range Old Renwick Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £7–10
Very nervous on the finish, but the wine will age wonderfully because of this acidic paranoia. Let it rest for two or three years and a seventeen- or eighteen-pointer might emerge. Wine Rack only.

Dashwood Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5–7
Superb ripe gooseberries, lemon and a faraway echo of melon. Superb texture.

Elston Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £13–20
A lot of money but a lot of wine. It has old fashioned vegetality of the Montrachet kind and limpid acids of the Kiwi kind. The marriage is superb: angular, classy, finely wrought and outstandingly, compactly balanced. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Framingham Pinot Noir 1998 12 £10–13
Thick juice, little Pinot pertinacity. Wine Rack only.

In the Black Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5–7
Wonderful clash of baked melon/pineapple with fresh lemon acids. They impact gorgeously.

Montana Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £5–7
Warm and deep. Great for complex fish and poultry.

Montana 'O' Ormond Estate Chardonnay 1998 15.5 £10–13
Very rich and ripe and ready with a curious woody/nutty edge on the finish. Touch yoghurty too. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1999 17 £7–10
Intensely classy and enormously creamy and rich without being too ripe and obvious. A provocative blend of smoky melon and fine acids. Has elegance, elongation and ease of effort.

Montana Reserve Gewürztraminer 1999 16 £7–10
Gorgeous spicy fruit, concentrated and multi-layered.

Montana Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999 16 £7–10
Brilliant hints of cut grass are subsumed under terrific fruit

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 £5–7
Sancerre? Knocks it into a cocked hat at this money. Great elegance and elongated fruit here.

Oyster Bay Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999 16.5 £5–7
Immense elegance and spread-easy fruit which stretches itself languorously over the taste buds, exposing layers of delicious fruit and acids

Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £5–7
The model for modern Sancerre: crisp, clean, gooseberryish, lingering, longish finish. An exemplary Sauvignon.

Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2000 16 £5–7
Richer, riper and, of course, less mature than the '99 but it has its own

charms and these include pineapple and apple richness.

Palliser Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Martinborough 1999 14 £7–10
Very plump and svelte and a touch self satisfied.

Quartz Reef Pinot Gris 1999 15.5 £10–13
Amusing pretension, at eleven quid, which is entertaining, but the price of admission is hard to swallow. Wine Rack only.

Te Mata Estate Chardonnay 1999 17 £7–10
A lot of money but a lot of wine. It has old fashioned vegetality of the Montrachet kind and limpid acids of the Kiwi kind. The marriage is superb. angular, classy, finely wrought and outstandingly, compactly balanced. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Timara Dry White 1999 13 £5.00
A little mule-loaded on the finish.

Tohu Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999 16 £7–10
Remarkable nutty richness with a hint of smoky melon plus silky acids.

Villa Maria Lightly Oaked Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Plump but not fat, lithe yet not thin, fruity yet not full it has, then, classic virtues of the old world and the purity of the grapes shines through.

Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 1999 16 £5–7
Young, as yet, but deliciously drinkable. Not like Riesling as you know it, and maybe loathe for its grouchiness – this one has smooth acids to help it age gracefully for years.

Villa Maria Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5–7
Gorgeous texture and warmth of welcome. Quite quite delicious.

Villa Maria Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Wairau Valley 1998 15.5 £7–10
Very rich and melony with the acidity lurking deliciously. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Villa Maria Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Wairau Valley 1999 17 £7–10
The tastiest Sauvignon in the store and the most expensive. But by gum, it motors smoothly and excitingly. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

UNWINS WHITE

De Redcliffe Mangatawhiri Chardonnay 1997 15 £7–10
Gentle melon fruit which finishes exotically.

Hunter's Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £7–10
Expressive and elegant.

Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £7–10
Lovely touch of ripe grass to the steely edge.

Kumeu River Chardonnay 1998 16 £10–13
Expensive but exceedingly elegant. Very finely wrought fruit.

Marlborough Gold Sauvignon 1999 14.5 £5–7
Very grassy and ripe – as if buttercups, daisies and grass are herbal elements.

Overall, a thick, ripe wine of no elegance but great with food.

Oyster Bay Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999 16.5 £5–7
Always one of Kiwi's most delicately decisive, deliciously dainty exports.

Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £5–7
Extremely elongated and energetic fruit – lovely, dry and minerally Terrific fish wine.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Church Road Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Gorgeous price, true, but then so is the fruit. It has great smoky flavour and texture.

Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £7–10
Exceptional style of fruit where the depth remains dry, retains complexity, finishes with rich promise.

Timara Dry White 1998 13.5 £5.00
Leaves a parched note in the back of the throat. Not at Wine Rack

Villa Maria Lightly Oaked Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Plump but not fat, lithe yet not thin, fruity yet not full – it has, then, classic virtues of the old world and the purity of the grapes shines through.

Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 1999 16 £5–7
Young, as yet, but deliciously drinkable. Not like Riesling as you know it, and maybe loathe for its grouchiness this one has smooth acids to help it age gracefully for years.

WAITROSE WHITE

Craggy Range Winery Chardonnay, Hawkes Bay 1999 16 £10–13
Splendid treat of a wine, nutty, caramely, rich and lingering. Individual and very stylish.

Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15 £7–10
Such a good vineyard for some years now and the '99 is typically ripe and rich.

Missionvale Chardonnay 1997 14 £10–13
Very chewy and woody. Fine, but pricey. Only from Waitrose Direct.

Montana Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Compelling style here of great class. Combines an impish directness of freshness with a suggestion of rich maturity.

Oyster Bay Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £5–7
The model for modern Sancerre: crisp, clean, gooseberryish, lingering, longish finish. An exemplary Sauvignon.

Tiki Ridge Dry White 1999 12.5 £5.00
The dullest white at Waitrose? Egregious fruit anyway.

Villa Maria Private Bin Chardonnay, Gisborne 1998 14 £5–7

Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 1999 16 £5–7
Young, as yet, but deliciously drinkable. Not like Riesling as you know it, and maybe loathe for its

grouchiness – this one has smooth acids to help it age gracefully for years.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Delegat's Reserve Chardonnay, Barrel Fermented 1998 14.5 £7–10
Very chewy. Great with scallop and crab dishes.

Matua Valley Chardonnay 1999 14 £5–7
Big and rich and a touch of a bully on the taste buds as it muscles in with little deftness.

Matua Valley Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5–7
A rich, not classically dry Sauvignon but none the worse for that. It is forward and well textured, layered and polished and it has a good, firm finish.

Montana Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Compelling style here of great class. Combines an impish directness of freshness with a suggestion of rich maturity.

Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16.5 £5–7
The model for modern Sancerre: crisp, clean, gooseberryish, lingering, longish finish. An exemplary Sauvignon.

PORTUGAL

The dullest food in Europe and the sloppiest drivers and there was a time, vintage port aside, when there was nothing worth sniffing at whatsoever on the table wine scene. Vinho Verde can be a delicious tipple, when the weather is warm and the sardines are fresh, but there are now some tenaciously tannic reds coming out of here and they have an engaging personality all of their own.

ASDA RED

Bright Brothers Baga 1997 14 ~£5.00

Douro 1997 13 ~£5.00

Duro Douro 1997 13.5 ~£5.00

BOOTHS RED

Alfrocheiro Preto Dao 1996 10 £10–13

Alianca Floral Douro Reserva 1997 15.5 ~£5.00
Lovely dry-edged raspberry/plum/blackcurrant fruit. Good fresh textured tenacity.

Alta Mesa Red 1998 15 ~£3.50

Bela Fonte Baga 1998 14 ~£5.00
Intense plum/cherry fruit with mild tannins. Good, soft/solid glugging here

Cartuxa Evora Alentejo 1995 16 £7–10
Superb texture, totally gripping yet (paradoxically) relaxed and non-meshing. Terrific rich fruit and fine tannins

Dao Dom Ferraz 1998 16.5 ~£5.00
Superb vintage of this old warhorse of a brand. It's thicker, more complex, finer tannically and with a wonderfully complex, lingering finish.

Espiga 1998 15.5 ~£5.00

Foral Alianca Reserva, Douro 1997 14.5 ~£5.00
Dry yet gently jammy. Needs food.

Portada Red Estremadura 1999 13.5 £5.00
Very ripe and juicy – in spite of the tannins.

Quinta da Villa Freire Douro 1996 15 £5–7

Quinta das Setencostas 1998 16.5 ~£5.00
From the great '98 vintage comes such texture, such richness, such satin-sided aplomb. Very elegant stuff.

Quinta de la Rosa Douro 1998 14 £5–7

Very juicy and energetic. Needs strong food

BUDGENS RED

Alta Mesa Red 1999 13 ~£3.50
Good for curries, with its sweet prune-like fruit.

Dao Dom Ferraz 1999 15 ~£5.00
A rich, blackcurranty specimen perfect for vegetable casseroles laden with spices and herbs.

Segada Trincadeira Preta-Castelao 1999 14 ~£5.00
Juicy and full of interest -- especially if you've got a plate of robust victuals in front of you

CWS RED

Big Baga 1999, Co-op 13.5 ~£5.00
A big bag of juice. Great with curries and their ilk.

Ramada Vinho Regional Estremadura 1998 13 ~£3.50

Star Mountain Touriga Nacional 1997 14 ~£5.00
Invigorating tannins with ripe, raw, plummy fruit.

Terra Boa Portuguese Red 1998 16.5 ~£5.00
Terrific personality, this wine: dry yet full of savoury, gently spicy richness and lovely tannins. I drank it with garlic and mozzarella omelettes with a touch of cardamom

KWIK SAVE RED

Ramada Red 1999 13 ~£5.00
Very ripe and sweet. Terrific with Indian food

Vila Regia 1995 15 ~£3.50

MAJESTIC RED

Contes de Cima Vinho Regional Alentejano 1997 14 £7-10

Duas Quintas 1997 16 £5-7
Chewy, rich, dry, elegant (yet faintly rustic and characterful) and it has a lovely surge of warm fruit on the finish which, though subtle, is telling

Tuella Douro Tinto 1997 15.5 ~£5.00
Very juicy and figgy - tastes like young raw (unfortified) port. Great with Chinese food

MORRISONS RED

Dom Ferraz Dao 1998 16.5 ~£5.00
Lovely herbiness and lingering richness. Great tannins and tense, dramatic fruit.

Tamara Red Vinho Regional Ribatejo 1999 13 ~£3.50
Rustic? It goes deeper than that.

ODDBINS RED

Foral Douro Grande Escolha 1997 15.5 £5-7
A warm, subtly spicy, tobacco-tinged wine of charm, character and yielding richness

Pegos Claros, Palmela 1994 15.5 £7-10

Quinta da Lagoalva, Ribatejo 1995 15 £5-7

Quinta das Setencostas, Alenquer 1998 16.5 £6–7
Huge generosity of fruit, warmth of disposition, weight of personality and panache of fruit. An exciting wine.

Quinta do Crasto Reserva, Doura 1997 17 £7–10
Beautifully cultured and plummy voiced but it has lovely slang expressions: tannin and earth for one.

Segada Tinto, Ribatejano 1999 16 £5.00
Deliciously different: sensual texture, spicy plum/blackcurrant fruit and very deep tannins.

Terra Boa Portuguese Red 1998 16.5 £5.00
Terrific personality, this wine: dry yet full of savoury, gently spicy richness and lovely tannins. I drank it with garlic and mozzarella omelettes with a touch of cardamom.

SAFEWAY RED

Bright Brothers Trincadeira Preta 1997 14 £5.00
Rich as a game sauce. Need I say more?

Falcoaria, Almeira 1997 14.5 £5–7
Fruity yet earthy, sweet yet dry, subtle yet impactful. A cultured food wine.

Miradouro, Terras do Sado 1999 12 £3.50
Very jammy and rich.

Palmela 1998 14.5 £5.00
Piles it on deliciously, this ripe and very ready red. Soft, concentrated, tannic.

Tamara Ribetajo 1999 13 £5.00
Great for curries. A sweet natural wine of cherry-dispositioned fruit.

Quinta de Bons-Ventos 1999 14 £5.00
Sweet plums and a hint of earth. Needs spicy food. Not at all stores

SAINSBURY'S RED

Ramada 1999 13 £3.50
Very sweet and curry-friendly.

Segada Trincadeira Preta-Castelao 1999 14 £5.00
Juicy and full of interest – especially if you've got a plate of robust victuals in front of you.

Senda do Vale Trincadeira Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 15.5 £5–7
Easily the best of Sainsbury's Portuguese reds but even so it's sweet layered and ripe. But the tannins save it. Needs food. Not at all stores.

SOMERFIELD RED

Bright Brothers Atlantic Vines Baga 1999 14 £5.00
Real bruising fruit. Nothing subtle here.

Fiuza Bright Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14.5 £5.00
Sweet but engagingly rich. Great food wine. Selected stores.

Portuguese Red NV, Somerfield 14 £3.50
Oh yes! With a curry, it's a perfect marriage.

Ramada Red 1999 13 £5.00
Very ripe and sweet. Terrific with Indian food

TESCO RED

Alianca Particular Palmela 1995 17 £5–7
Such sweetness and emulsion-thick texture yet it's dry, herby, very rich and classy on the finish. A terrific wine. Top 85 stores.

Bela Fonte Baga 1998 14 £5.00
Intense plum/cherry fruit with mild tannins. Good, soft/solid glugging here.

Dao, Tesco 1998 14 £5.00
Juicy, fruity and hugely food friendly.

Dom Ferraz Bairrada 1997 16 £5.00
Old Dom's back on form and sprightlier than ever! Terrific juice here – and serious underlying tannin. A tenacious wine of substance and style. Top 80 stores.

Dom Ferraz Dao 1997 15 £5.00
Juicy hints of rusticity and earthiness, good bold strokes on the finish.

Portuguese Red NV, Tesco 14.5 £3.50
Totally convincing fruit with a pleasant earthy tang to tightly assembled plums and raspberries (these under-ripe). A brilliant bargain for bangers and mash.

Vinha Nove Tras-os-Montes 1998 15.5 £5.00

THRESHER RED

Dom Ferraz Dao 1997 15 £5.00
Juicy hints of rusticity and earthiness, good bold strokes on the finish.

Fiuza Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 14 £5.00

Pedras do Monte 1998 16 £5.00
Very tarry and ripe, hugely well ameliorated tannins; the whole effect is balsamic and bursting with fruit. It really smacks the taste buds, this wine. Not at Wine Rack or Bottoms Up.

Segada Tinto 1998 15.5 £5.00
Very rich and multi layered ripeness. Great with food.

UNWINS RED

Bela Fonte Jaen 1998 16 £5.00
Superb texture, biting fresh tannins, soft ripe fruit and galloping, zesty finish. Classy yet irreverent.

Dao Dom Ferraz Reserva Caves Primavera 1999 15.5 £5.00
Full of fun, juicy, jammy, jaw breakingly fruity.

Pedras do Monte 1999 15 £5.00
Oh! What a wine for curried meat and veg!

Portada Vinho Regional Estremadura 1999 13.5 £5.00
Sweet undertone

Quinta das Setencostas, Alenquer 1998 16.5 £5–7
Huge generosity of fruit, warmth of disposition, weight of personality and panache of fruit. An exciting wine.

Quinta do Crasto Reserva 1997 17 £7–10
Beautifully cultured and plummy voiced but it has lovely slang expressions: tannin and earth for one.

Segada Red 1998 15.5 £5.00
Juicy, ripe, delicious, rich yet not OTT, good tannins, gently tenacious.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Dom Ferraz Dao 1997 15 £5.00
Juicy hints of rusticity and earthiness, good bold strokes on the finish.

Fiuza Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 14 £5.00

Pedras do Monte 1998 16 £5.00
Very tarry and ripe, hugely well ameliorated tannins; the whole effect is balsamic and bursting with fruit. It really smacks the taste buds, this wine. Not at Wine Rack or Bottoms Up.

Segada Tinto 1998 15.5 £5.00
Very rich and multi layered ripeness. Great with food.

WAITROSE RED

Terra de Lobos, Quinta do Casal Branco 1999 14 £5.00
Rich almost soupy fruit but has good, ripe tannins to provide balance.

Trincadeira Joao Portugal Ramos 1999 16 £7.10
One of the most civilised tipples from Portugal – beautifully smooth, aromatic, plump and lingering.

Vila Santa Alentejo 1998 16.5 £7.10
Superb multi layered richness and velvet textured tightness (ie concentration) of fruit.

Vinho do Monte, Alentejo 1998 13.5 £5.00
Very ripe.

WINE CELLAR RED

Belafonte Baga, Beiras 1998 14 £5.00
Intense plum/cherry fruit with mild tannins. Good, soft/solid glugging here.

Portada Tinto Estremadura 1995 16 £5.00
Great value here. An aromatic, gorgeously soft, rich, ripe wine with a walloping fruity finish.

Terra Boa 1997 12 £5.00
Sweet red for curries.

ASDA WHITE

Vinho Verde 1999, Asda 10 £3.50

CWS WHITE

Fiuza Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
Rather dainty at first and then it really surges into fruity action. Captivating final richness here.

Ramada Vinho Regional Estremadura 1998 15.5 £3.50

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Falua 1998 13.5 £3.50

Portuguese White 1999, Somerfield 15 £3.50
A rich and very ready food wine suits a whole range of dishes from tuna salad to chicken tikka.

MORRISONS WHITE

Sinfonia White Alentejo 1998 13 £5.00

Tamara White Ribatejo 1998 12 £3.50
Jolie laide, as the French have it. That is to say, it's a contradiction.

ODDBINS WHITE

Bela Fonte Bical 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Very pert and fleshy, great for mergers with robust dishes, and a lush acidity.

Segada Branco, Ribatejano 1999 15 £5.00
Slightly fat edge gives it character and the edgy acids food compatibility.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Globus Ribetajo 1999 14 ~£5.00
Rather clotted and sullen.

Tamara Ribetajo White 1999 14.5 ~£3.50
Lovely ripe melon fruit.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Portuguese Rosé, Sainsbury's 13.5 ~£3.50

Vinho Verde, Sainsbury's 13.5 £3.50

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Fiuza Bright Chardonnay 1999 16 ~£5.00
Rather dainty at first and then it really surges into fruity action. Captivating final richness here.

Portuguese White 1999, Somerfield 15 ~£3.50
A rich and very ready food wine suits a whole range of dishes from tuna salad to chicken tikka

TESCO WHITE

Bela Fonte Bical 1998 15 ~£5.00
Good clean fun – for fish. Very good price for such purposeful fruit. 200 stores

Dry Vinho Verde, Tesco 13.5 ~£5.00

UNWINS WHITE

Bical Bela Fonte 1998 15 ~£5.00
Good clean fun for fish. Very good price for such purposeful fruit.

Segada White 1998 13 ~£5.00

WAITROSE WHITE

Quinta de Simaens Vinho Verde 1998 10 ~£5.00

Terras do Rio Quinta de Abrigada 1998 15 ~£3.50

ROMANIA

What happened, readers so often ask me, to the magical, cheap Pinot Noirs of the late 1980s and early 1990s? I wish I knew. Romania itself doesn't know. It just remains puzzled at why UK professional wine buyers have lost their appetite for Romanian wines. The country has not progressed as it could have done, though it has some marvellous vines and creditable grape growers and wine makers. Needs another revolution probably.

BUDGENS RED

Romanian Classic Pinot Noir 1998 13.5 ~£5.00
Classic? Nope. But drinkable and dry.

Romanian Young Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 ~£5.00
Delicious warmth and soft peppery blackcurrants.

Sahateni Merlot 1998 15 ~£5.00
Hugely slurpable and food friendly Leather, herbs and subtly spicy plums.

CWS RED

Romanian Prairie Merlot 1999, Co-op 14.5 ~£3.50
A party wine for ripe throats and warm hearts.

MORRISONS RED

Romanian Classic Pinot Noir 1998 11 ~£3.50
Classic? Hardly. It's too toffeed for that.

Special Reserve Pinot Noir 1998 10 ~£5.00
Very raw tannins. They skin the cheeks.

Special Reserve Sangiovese 1998 10 ~£5.00
More raw tannins My granny would choke to death on them.

SAFEWAY RED

Idle Rock Merlot 1998 12 ~£5.00

SOMERFIELD RED

Pietroasa Young Vatted Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 ~£5.00
Try it as an alternative to Beaujolais. It has similar cheeky freshness but more character, bite and tannins. And a rich finish.

TESCO RED

Reka Valley Romanian Pinot Noir, Tesco 15.5 ~£3.50

Terrific! Best blend yet of this Pinot. Has bitter cherry richness, a hint of ripe plum, but the winning ingredient is the brilliant tannic edge. Classic Pinot? No, but a brilliant bargain of wrap-around-your-palate fruit.

THRESHER RED

River Route Limited Edition Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 13.5 ~£5.00
Juicy and ripe.

River Route Pinot Noir 1998 12 ~£5.00
Odd cough mixture undertone.

VICTORIA WINE RED

River Route Limited Edition Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 13.5 ~£5.00
Juicy and ripe.

River Route Pinot Noir 1998 12 £5.00
Odd cough mixture undertone.

BUDGENS WHITE

Romanian Classic Gewürztraminer 1998 11 ~£5.00
Very odd and vegetal. Hardly a classic Gewürz.

Romanian Classic Pinot Gris 1999 13 ~£5.00
Dry, faint tang of dried apricot.

MORRISONS WHITE

Romanian Special Reserve Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1996 16 £5.00
Catch it while it's at its peak of maturity: creamy, textured, deliciously firm and fruity.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Château Cotnari, Blanc de Cotnari 1998 10 £5.00
Very bland and boring.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Romanian Merlot Rosé NV, Sainsbury's 14 ~£3.50

THRESHER WHITE

River Route Limited Edition Chardonnay 1997 15.5 ~£5.00
The first Chardonnay made on this section of the Danube! Delicious

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

River Route Limited Edition Chardonnay 1997 15.5 ~£5.00
The first Chardonnay made on this section of the Danube! Delicious.

WAITROSE WHITE

Willow Ridge Sauvignon/Feteasca 1999 15.5 ~£3.50
Unusual and very pretty aperitif with a light floral/honey undertone. Overall, crisp and fresh.

RUSSIA

If only Russian wine danced as beautifully on the tongue as Safin and Kournekova dance around a tennis court, we'd have wine to rave about.

SAFEWAY RED

Caucasus Valley, 15 £5.00
Matrassa, Georgia 1998
Great fun. A real Russian doll here as it unwraps one dry flavour after another.

Odessos Steppe Cabernet 13 £5.00
Sauvignon, Ukraine 1998
Quirky, bold, tannic, yet very juicy

Tamada Saperavi, 13.5 £5.00
Georgia 1998
Dry and jammy.

SOUTH AFRICA

There was a huge surge of enthusiasm when the Cape wine industry, nearly 350 years old now, had its export fetters removed, at the time South Africa was considered to have become a civilised country again with the abolition of apartheid. But where are those dazzling bottles we expected to come pouring out year after year? True, there are some high spots, like Kim Warwick's Chardonnay at Waitrose, and the Spice Route wines (lots of places), and there are others, but overall I admit to feeling disappointed that the Cape hasn't gone from strength to strength as I anticipated. Most individual red grape is Pinotage (young and feisty and best drunk not more than two years old because it goes soppy with age). Chenin Blanc shines most characterfully among the whites, the odd splendidly quirky Chardonnay apart (like Jordan). The Chenin grape exhibits a wonderful subtle spiciness and gooseberryness lacking in the often flaccid specimens from France.

ASDA RED

Cape Merlot 1999, Asda 13.5 £5.00
Very juicy. Needs pasta.

Dumisani Ruby Cabernet/Merlot 1999 15.5 £5.00
Juicy with good tannins to relieve the palate from the all-fruit attack.

Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz 1997 14 £5.00

Landskroon Merlot Reserve 1999 16 £5–7
Gigantic hedgerow fruitiness. The wine simply swims with flavours. Utterly seductive from nose to throat.

Long Mountain Red NV 14 £5.00

Pinotage Reserve 1999, Asda 14 £5.00
Very sweet and juicy – perfect for . . . curries? ('fraid so.)

Porcupine Ridge Syrah 1999 16 £5–7
There used to be two styles of Syrah: the Rhone's (dry) and the Aussie's (very rich) Now comes the Cape's Crusader And it makes a very strong, rich case for itself.

South African Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Asda 14 £5.00
The dry, stalky edge, subtle, of the peppery Cabernet gives the wine some added character.

South African Pinotage 1999, Asda 13.5 £5.00
Again, it's so juicy!

Van Loveren Cabernet Shiraz 1999 13 £5.00
Too juicy.

BOOTHS RED

Helderberg Shiraz 1999 15 £5.00
Hint of cigar box to the plum and blackcurrant fruit.

Spice Route Andrew's Hope 1998 16.5 £5–7
Thundering riches abound here: blackcurrants, tar, violets, rosewater, leather and a subtle spicy tang. Great stuff.

Stormy Cape Cinsault/ Shiraz 1998 16 £5.00
Wonderfully offensive stuff. dog-eared, cheroot stained. rubber-necked, spicy, fruit, utterly quaffable and food friendly. A storm in a glass.

Welmoed Merlot 1998 15.5 £5–7
Juicy plums, raisins, hint of herb and tobacco. Brilliant for roast dinner party meats.

Wide River Pinotage 1999 15.5 £5–7
Curious grassy undertone to the cheroot-tinged juice. Great food wine.

BUDGENS RED

Cape Medium Fruity Red NV, Budgens 11 £3.50

Long Mountain Merlot Shiraz 1998 14.5 £5–7
Another excellent curry red.

CWS RED

Arniston Bay Ruby Cabernet-Merlot 1998 13.5 £5.00

Birdfield Shiraz 1998 14 £5.00

Cape American Oak Pinotage 1999, Co-op 14 £5.00
Oddly ripe and rich, almost baked in its warmth and depth of flavour, but the tannins are a real presence.

Cape Indaba Pinotage 1998 13 £5.00

Cape Ruby Cabernet, Oak Aged 1999, Co-op 13.5 £5.00
Loads of juice. Perfect with Indian food

Elephant Trail Cinsault/ Merlot 2000, Co-op 15 £5.00
Good jammy richness with terrifically vivacious tannins which spark a riot of flavours on the finish.

Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999 15.5 £5.00
Great pun, great fruit. Though it isn't so much Côtes-du-Rhône as juicy Bandol-style. Great quaffing style. Superstores only.

Natural State Cape Soleil Organic Shiraz 1999 15 £5–7
Expensive but ultimately deeply satisfying. The fruit is rounded yet dry, rich yet not over-ripe, full yet delicate in parts. It is its own wine, not a copy of Rhône or McLaren Vale. Superstores only.

Oak Village Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 £5.00
Delicious Cab – it takes you from nose to throat in great comfort.

Pinnacle Merlot 1998 16 £5–7

Very thrusting style, taking no prisoners, and it has something to say for itself. 'I am utterly hedonistic and delicious.' Amen to that. Superstores only.

Railroad Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5.00
Pulsates with an interesting duo-level of Cabernet dryness and hint of spice (pepper) and the soft, saddle-weary richness of the Shiraz. Superstores only.

Three Worlds Pinotage Shiraz Zinfandel 1999, Co-op 15.5 £5–7
Has immense chutzpah which does not overstay its welcome. The fruit is certainly ripe but it has little nooks and crannies of intrigue where odd fruits, acids, nuts and earthy bits lurk.

Winds of Change Pinotage/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5.00
Superb elegance and dry richness here. Has a savoury biscuit quality to its texture and a quietly thrilling climax of spicy plums and berries. Superstores only.

KWIK SAVE RED

South African Cape Red 1999, Somerfield 15 £3.50
Beautifully soft and luminous as it courses, cherries and plums, over the taste buds.

South African Cinsault Ruby Cabernet 1999, Somerfield 15 £5.00
Delicious layers of ripe, rich fruit. Baked, yes. But not overdone.

M&S RED

Bin 121 Merlot Ruby Cabernet 1998 15.5 £5.00

Cape Country Cinsault/ Ruby Cabernet 1999 13.5 £5.00
Juicy and very forward.

Rock Ridge Pinotage 1999 16.5 £5.00
Brilliant spicy warmth and wit here. The tobacco and rubber, the smoke and the basket of leathery fruit, all hang together sexily.

Rockridge Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5.00
Jammy with dry overtones.

MAJESTIC RED

Drosty-Hof Merlot 1998 16 £5–7
Dark and crunchy fruit, richly leathery, faintly spicy, chocolatey and deep. It's dry for all this and the tannins are warm and savoury.

Fairview Merlot 1998 16.5 £5–7
Lovely lingering, non-leathery Merlot with startlingly glamorous tannins of the younger Zsa-Zsa Gabor variety: cheeky, finely boned and exuberant The finish is gripping.

Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999 15.5 £5.00
Great pun, great fruit. Though it isn't so much Côtes-du-Rhône as juicy Bandol style. Great quaffing style.

MORRISONS RED

Cathedral Cellars Merlot 1996 13 £7–10

Fairview Malbec 1999 16.5 £5–7

Juicy but Fairview's wines are always elegant and purposeful on the finish, as this one is, and so what seems forward is only, in the final analysis, rich friendliness.

Namaqua Classic Red NV (3 litre box) 11.5 £5–7
Sweet and basic. Price band is for a 75cl equivalent.

South African Red NV 13 £3–£3.50

Spice Route Andrew's Hope 1998 16.5 £5–7
Thundering riches abound here: blackcurrants, tar, violets, rosewater, leather and a subtle spicy tang. Great stuff

Van Loveren Merlot 1999 13 £5.00
Too sweet for me

ODDBINS RED

Beyerskloof Pinotage, Stellenbosch 1999 16 £5–7
The ultimate pizza and savoury tart red. Tobacco, cassis, herbs and tannins is the recipe.

Blaauwklippen Shiraz 1997 13.5 £5–7

Boschkloof Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5–7

Boschkloof Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot 1997 14 £7–10
Fine Wine Stores only.

Fairview Carignan, Coastal Region 1998 13 £5–7

Fairview Shiraz Mourvedre 1998 17.5 £5–7
The aroma is initially of fine Cuban cigars from tobacco grown on the plain overlooking the Baie de Cerdos. This finesse, powerfully augmented by the nigh 15% of alcohol as the ripe, spicy fruit floods the mouth, breaks up into a variety of soft fruits with light, soft tannins. A big yet lithe wine of rugged charms (yet smooth).

Fairview Zinfandel Cinsault 1999 17.5 £5–7
Such energy and delivery of complex acids and fruits is remarkable. Very savoury and deep, it has to be appreciated with rich food.

Glen Carlou Pinot Noir 1998 13.5 £7–10
Fine Wine Stores only.

Kanonkop, Paul Sauer, Stellenbosch 1995 14 £13–20
Juicy, ripe, teeth tremblingly gushing. Needs food.

Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £7–10
Curious ambivalence here: youthful exuberance with seasoned mellowness. The wine offers ripe plum, subtle tobacco nuances, hint of chocolate and tea (lapsang souchong) and a smoothness of almost smug hauteur. For all that, nine quid is a lot of money. It can be opened and decanted five to six hours beforehand.

Longridge Bay View Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5–7

Longridge Bay View Merlot 1998 14 £5–7

Longridge Bay View Pinotage 1998 15 £5–7

Radford Dale Merlot, Stellenbosch 1999 14 £7–10
Very juicy and ripe on the finish. Expensive for what it is.

Savanha Shiraz, Western Cape 1997 13 £5–7
A juicy, curry-friendly red of great richness.

Saxenberg Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 1997 17 £10–13
Stunning! Quite stunning: raisins, figs, spicy cherries, liquorice and herbs.

Stellenzicht Pinotage 1998 17 £7–10
Astonishingly richly textured, as clotted as a hawser, and it's difficult to unravel the fruit from the tannins. But the complexity is considerable – it includes tobacco and chocolate and the finish manages, paradoxically, to achieve elegance in spite of the dynamic, galloping fruit.

Stellenzicht Shiraz 1998 15 £7–10

Vinum Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 1999 14 £5–7
A juicy, curry-friendly red of great richness.

Yonder Hill Cabernet Merlot, Stellenbosch 1998 16 £7–10
Stupendously soft and ripe but not soppy or stodgy. Wonderful texture here

Yonder Hill Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 1998 16.5 £7–10
Utterly compelling in its argument that Cape Cabernet can be just as textured as claret but far more hedgerow-like in its wonderful fruit.

SAFEWAY RED

Apostle's Falls Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £5–7
What wouldn't they give in Bordeaux for such ripeness, such texture, such savoury richness with austerity. A beautiful performer, this specimen, on every front.

Arniston Bay Ruby Cabernet/Merlot 1999 13 £5.00
Very juicy.

Cape Soleil Organic Pinotage 1998 9 £5.00
Thin and insubstantial. Why sell organic wine as puny as this just to see the word organic on shelf?

Fairview Malbec 1999 16.5 £5–7
Wonderfully generous and hedonistically textured fruit here. So soft (yet not gooey), so ripe (yet not puerile), so all-engagingly rich (yet not over-friendly or falsely hospitable).

Kanonkop 'Kadette' Estate Wine 1998 15.5 £5–7
Brilliant value. Has character and backbone, good tannins, firm plummy fruit.

Kleinbosch Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14 £5–7
Cabernet as happy juice. Very soft and ripe. 29 stores.

Kleinbosch Young Vatted Pinotage, Paarl 1999 15 £5.00
Lovely dry tannins add the cutting edge to rich, deep fruit.

Landskroon Cinsault/Shiraz, Paarl 1999 15.5 £5–7
Firmly ripe and soft-hitting fruit of gentle spice, posh plums and lush finishing herbs.

Landskroon Shiraz, Paarl 1998 15.5 £5–7
Very jammy but the texture holds firm (and ripe) and the wondrous

generosity of the fruit is thrilling. Selected stores.

Simsberg Pinot Noir, Paarl 1998 13.5 £5–7
Good Pinot aroma and some hint of mystery in the fruit but lacks the impact to intrigue the brain for very long.

Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 14 £5.00
Very very dry. Lovely with undercooked red meats

Stellenbosch Merlot 1999 15.5 £5.00
Deliciously sunny and savoury. Nicely textured. Most stores.

SAINSBURY'S RED

African Legend Shiraz The Quivering Spear * 1998 13 £5.00
A spicy, intensely warm wine of immense savouriness. Excellent with chilled pastas and vegetable dishes. Most stores. * No joke it's actually got this on the label. It does not refer to many South Africans' preferred method of cork removal.

Bellingham Merlot 1998 16 £5–7
Curious pear-drop undertone to rich, dry fruit. But delicious? It redefines Merlot's mouthwatering deliciousness. Most stores

Bellingham Premium Pinotage 1998 14 £7–10
Dry and more than a touch expensive for the level of fruit on offer. 50 stores.

Bellingham Shiraz 1998 16 £5–7
Cheeky fruit for it seems aromatically Aussie but Chilean in finish. Lovely dark riches here. Fullness and flavour but not OTT or puerile. Not at all stores.

Clos Malverne Cabernet Pinotage 1998 15 £5–7
Curious marriage of unlikely grapes. The old fart Cabernet meets the whizz kid Pinotage. Imagine Denis Thatcher sleeping with Britney Spears. Fruity? yes. Enormously so and very entertaining. Not at all stores.

Fairview Carignan 1999 15.5 £5–7
Intensely plummy and polished with a layered, double-effect finish combining spice with baked fruit. 85 stores.

Fairview Pinotage 1999 17 £5–7
One of South Africa's, perhaps the world's, most joyously juicy yet seriously delicious and multi-layered wines. It has wonderful graduated texture, a middle wallop of berries and a striking, witty finish. Selected stores

Hidden Valley Limited Release Pinotage 1997 13 £13–20
I don't think it's worth fifteen quid when it offers fruit less gripping than six quid Sainsbury Cape reds. 50 stores

Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998 16 £5.00
Delicious as both a throat charmer and food companion. It has layers of textured fruit, warm, touch spicy, hint of pepper, good tannins. Lush, luxurious, lissom, lovely to down!

Middlevlei Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5–7
A food wine. Has a celeriac edge to the firm tannins and a hint of some Indian spice on the finish. A serious wine of dry, complex, elegant quirkiness. Not at all stores.

Milton Grove Cabernet Franc 1999 16 £5–7
Mouthfilling and mindfilling – the fruit is almost gung ho but not, thankfully, fully so. The delicious restraint is courtesy of the civilising tannins. A delicious, sunny, joyful wine. Not at all stores.

Railroad Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999 15.5 £5.00
Pulsates with an interesting duo-level of Cabernet dryness and hint of spice (pepper) and the soft, saddle-weary richness of the Shiraz. Most stores.

South African Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Sainsbury's 15.5 £5.00
Utterly unpretentious and deliciously soft, ripe and rich. It makes few demands on the intellect, true, but as a slab of fruit it is marvellously quaffable. Most stores.

South African Pinotage NV, Sainsbury's 16 £5.00
Terrific modernity and chutzpah here. Hint of civilised boy racer rubber, spice (cinnamon? cardamom? coriander?) and a lovely dry tannic finish to the cassis/plum fruit.

South African Red NV, Sainsbury's 15 £3.50
An eager-to-please glugging red of some dignity and wit. Most stores.

South African Reserve Selection Pinotage 1998, Sainsbury's 16.5 £5–7
A high class Pinotage which manages to put a brave face on burnt rubber, cassis, pepper, blackberries and dry earthy tannins. 155 selected stores.

Spice Route Andrew's Hope Cabernet Merlot 1999 16.5 £5–7
Great opening of spice and leather (aromatically) and then it turns more petit château and dry and then it goes full frontal rich and ripe. Good integrated tannins on the final flourish. Most stores.

Spice Route Flagship Merlot 1998 17 £13–20
A big, rich special occasion Merlot of massive depth, lingering tannins and huge food compatibility. 50 stores.

Stowells of Chelsea Cinsault Pinotage Sainsbury (3 litre box) 15.5 £5.00
Lots of smoky, ripe fruit, fluid and full. Hint of spiced plum to it plus good earthy tannins. But mostly it's all rich, flowing fruit which comes to a very satisfying climax. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Winds of Change Pinotage Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5.00
Superb elegance and dry richness here. Has a savoury biscuit quality to its texture and a quietly thrilling climax of spicy plums and berries. Most stores.

Yonder Hill Inanda 1997 17 £7–10
A powerful Bordeaux blend of Cab Sauv, Merlot and Cab Franc which is exotic, warm, spicy, thick and deep, and very sustaining A marvellous wine for game dishes. Selected stores.

SOMERFIELD RED

Bellingham Pinotage 1999 17 £5–7
Stunning tannins! Even Lafite doesn't

get tannins this exciting, this tasty, this deep. Limited distribution.

Bush Vines Pinotage 1999, Somerfield 16 ~~£4.99~~
Those spicy, exotic tannins! Or is it the fruit? Either way, this is a roller-coaster experience.

Kumala Cinsault Pinotage 1999 15 ~~£5.00~~
Drink it with chicken dhansak.

Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £7–10
Curious ambivalence here: youthful exuberance with seasoned mellowness. The wine offers ripe plum, subtle tobacco nuances, hint of chocolate and tea (lapsang souchong) and a smoothness of almost smug hauteur. For all that, nine quid is a lot of money. It can be opened and decanted five to six hours beforehand. Limited distribution

South African Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Somerfield 16 ~~£5.00~~
A lovely specimen of Cape warmth and wit. A dry, tobacco-edged red of huge charm and commitment.

South African Cape Red 1999, Somerfield 15 ~~£3.50~~
Beautifully soft and luminous as it courses, cherries and plums, over the taste buds.

South African Cinsault Ruby Cabernet 1999, Somerfield 15 ~~£5.00~~
Delicious layers of ripe, rich fruit. Baked, yes. But not overdone.

South African Pinotage 1998, Somerfield 16.5 ~~£5.00~~
Superb! Spice, sustaining fruit, great active tannins, finely knit acids all in one fabulous experience.

Winds of Change Pinotage Cabernet 1998 16 ~~£5.00~~
Superb elegance and dry richness here. Has a savoury biscuit quality to its texture and a quietly thrilling climax of spicy plums and berries. Limited distribution.

SPAR RED

Chiwara Cinsault/Ruby Cabernet 1998 13 ~~£5.00~~
Goes a bit walkabout on the finish. Starts off well, if very ripely, but then . . .

Chiwara Pinotage 1998, Spar 14.5 ~~£5.00~~

Chiwara Ruby Cabernet/ Pinotage 1998, Spar 11 ~~£5.00~~

Table Mountain Pinot Noir NV 10 ~~£5.00~~

TESCO RED

African Legend Pinotage 1998 14 ~~£5.00~~
Not at all stores

Beyers Truter Pinotage 1998, Tesco 16.5 ~~£5.00~~
Stunning bargain for Christmas lunch Really hums with aromatic richness, hint of spice, touch of chocolate and cassis, but it's fresh, the tannins are alert, the whole surging flavoursome construct is eager to delight the palate. At most stores.

Cape Cinsault NV, Tesco 15.5 ~~£3.50~~

Cape Cinsault/Pinotage NV, Tesco 15.5 ~£5.00
Juicy and super-ripe. Good with . . . curries etc.

Clos Malverne Pinotage 1999 16 £5–7
Always a solid hitter, this vintage has violet/plum overtones to its very free-flowing fruit. Aromatic, exotic, spicy, delicious. 100 selected stores.

Diemersdal Shiraz 1998 15 £5–7

Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999 15.5 ~£5.00

Goiya Glaan 1999 15 ~£5.00
Most individual. The fruit is far more serious and complex than the hysteria of the label would suggest.

International Winemaker Cabernet/Merlot, Tesco 15 ~£5.00
Very generous and soft. Really cheering tippling.

Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz 1999 15 ~£5.00
Bounces with personality without being trying or too puerile. Has a gentle pepperiness from the Cabernet and a touch of leather and hedgerow fruitiness from the Shiraz.

Kumala Cinsault/ Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 13.5 ~£5.00
Juicy with a hint of an exotic herb. Touch of tobacco is good but its overall jamminess suits spicy food best.

Landskroon Premier Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5–7
Most stores

Long Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 13.5 ~£5.00

Oak Village Pinotage/ Merlot 1999 13 ~£5.00

South African Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz 1999, Tesco 14 ~£5.00
Has a dry beefiness and richness which demands to be fed

South African Red NV, Tesco 14.5 ~£3.50
Terrific quaffing here. Even throws sophisticated tannins.

South African Reserve Cabernet NV, Tesco 12 ~£5.00
Very jammy and sweet. Like experiencing one of those continental cigars with cherries and kirsch in the leaves

Spice Route Andrew's Hope Merlot/Cabernet, Malmesbury 1998 16.5 £5–7
The essence of new world cheekiness – it dares to be utterly unashamedly immediate and all embracing. It's got so much jammy richness, which never goes gooey or blowsy. It's great, gorgeous and grandly underpriced. Top 80 stores.

Spice Route Cabernet Merlot 1998 16.5 £7–10
Aromatic, very ripe and uplifting, full of deep fruit and beautifully finished off. 100 selected stores

Winds of Change Cabernet/Pinotage 1999 16 ~£5.00
Superb jammy richness balanced by dry, earthy tannins. Lovely quaffability. Has a savoury undertone to its exuberance which keeps it serious. Remarkable New World wine. 100 selected stores.

THRESHER RED

Cape View Cinsault/ Shiraz 1998 12 ~~£5.00~~
Curious lack of personality on the finish. It starts with a brash note but hits a trough on the way to the throat.

Capells Court Cabernet 1998 14 ~~£5–7~~
Very ripe, very curry friendly. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Oak Village Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 ~~£5.00~~
Delicious Cab – it takes you from nose to throat in great comfort.

The Pinotage Company Pinotage 1999 13.5 ~~£5–7~~
Touch expensive for the style of juice. Wine Rack only.

Villiera Pinot Noir G & G Reserve 1997 13 ~~£7–10~~

Winelands Cabernet Sauvignon/Franc, Stellenbosch 1997 13.5 ~~£5–7~~

UNWINS RED

African Legend Pinotage 1998 14 ~~£5.00~~

Bellingham Pinotage 1998 16 ~~£5–7~~
Perfect mature amalgam of spicy fruit and brisk, savoury tannins. Drink it with roast game.

Cape Cinsault/Merlot 1999 13 ~~£5.00~~
Sheer juice – only the lolly stick is missing.

Cathedral Cellar Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 15 ~~£7–10~~
At its peak of fruitiness. The tannins are holding out well against the glucose.

Clos Malverne Cabernet/ Shiraz, Stellenbosch 1997 14.5 ~~£5–7~~

Clos Malverne Pinotage, Stellenbosch 1999 16 ~~£5–7~~
One of the lushest, most aromatic, most tannically teasing of Pinotages Gushes with tobacco and spicy plum personality.

Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16 ~~£7–10~~
Beautifully concentrated and smooth. Great elegance and depth here.

Leef Op Hoop Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot, Stellenbosch 1998 14 ~~£5–7~~
Jammy, savoury, very ripe. Needs rich food

Millbrook Cinsault 1998 14 ~~£5.00~~
Very juicy and ripe, Needs food.

Neil Joubert Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 13 ~~£5–7~~
Goes a bit tutti frutti on the finish.

Spice Route Shiraz 1998 16 ~~£7–10~~
Very meaty and dark. Lovely richness and exuberance without pretentious show-offness.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Cape View Cinsault/ Shiraz 1998 12 ~~£5.00~~
Curious lack of personality on the finish. It starts with a brash note but hits a trough on the way to the throat.

Oak Village Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 15 ~~£5.00~~
Delicious Cab – it takes you from nose to throat in great comfort.

The Pinotage Company Pinotage 1999 13.5 £5–7
Touch expensive for the style of juice.

WAITROSE RED

Avontuur Estate Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot 1998 13 £5.00

Clos Malverne Basket Pressed Pinotage, Stellenbosch 1999 16 £7–10
Tobacco richness – fresh and delicious.

Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999 13.5 £5.00

Hamilton Russell Pinot Noir 1997 13 £13–20
Only from Waitrose Direct.

Hidden Valley Pinotage, Devon Valley 1996 15 £13–20
Nothing hidden about the hideous Marbella beach bum medallion-laden label.

Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £7–10
Curious ambivalence here: youthful exuberance with seasoned mellowness The wine offers ripe plum, subtle tobacco nuances, hint of chocolate and tea (lapsang souchong) and a smoothness of almost smug hauteur. For all that, nine quid is a lot of money. It can be opened and decanted five to six hours beforehand.

Spice Route Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998 16.5 £7–10
Aromatic, very ripe and uplifting, full of deep fruit and beautifully finished off.

Spice Route Flagship Merlot 1998 17 £13–20
A big, rich special occasion Merlot of massive depth, lingering tannins and huge food compatibility. Not at all stores.

Steenberg Merlot, Constantia 1998 15 £7–10
A very collected, finely textured Merlot of warmth and substance. Classy finish to it.

Thelema Mountain Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 14 £13–20
Lingering finish but the overture is demure.

WINE CELLAR RED

Jordan Merlot 1998 16 £7–10
Most unusual Merlot (no leather) but it compels the palate to like it because it's so blatantly deliciously rich, ripe and ready.

L'Avenir Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 13 £7–10

Neil Joubert Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 13 £5–7
Goes a bit tutti-frutti on the finish.

Neil Joubert Pinotage 1998 16 £5–7
Very subtle tobacco hint to the creamy fruit. Great texture and tension between fruit and acids. Terrific food wine

Paradyskloof Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1997 13.5 £5–7

Simonsig Pinotage 1998 16 £5–7
A raucous wine which has, nevertheless, something to shout about: tannins! A brilliant, exotic food wine of style.

ASDA WHITE

Cape Chardonnay 1999, Asda 15.5 ~£2.50
Terrific richness of fruit and depth of flavour. Needs food, so fulsome is it.

Cape Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Asda 13.5 ~£5.00
Deliciously rich and calm. Very classy, touch warm on the finish for the classicist, but I like it.

First Vintage 2000 13.5 ~£5.00

Van Loveren Blanc de Noirs 2000 14 ~£5.00
A delicious cherry/raspberry aperitif

BOOTHS WHITE

Altus Sauvignon Blanc, Paarl 1999 13 ~£5.00
Odd ragged edge.

Jordan Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £7–10
Melon and lime yoghurt with a hint of walnut. An individual approach to the Chardonnay riddle and an original solution. Deliciously so.

Landema Falls Colombard Chardonnay NV 15 £3.50
A chewy food wine. Tastes slightly baked.

Springfield Estate 'Life from Stone' Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £5.7
Very impressively minerally gooseberryish, grassy (rich and ripe, not tart and fresh) plus complex acids.

Welmoed Sauvignon Blanc 1999 14 ~£5.00
Tight and grassy. Terrific with crustacea.

BUDGENS WHITE

Cape White NV, Budgens 11 ~£3.50

Clear Mountain Chenin Blanc NV 13.5 ~£3.50
Will do justice to large fish and chip parties (as long as the wallies aren't too vinegary).

Glen Eden Chardonnay 1998 14 ~£5.00
Good with an oriental take-away.

Long Mountain Sauvignon Blanc 1999 13 ~£5.00
The fruit overwhelms the acids.

Long Mountain Semillon Chardonnay 1999 14.5 ~£5.00
Has some character and charm. Ripe and forward but far from uncontrolled.

Stowells of Chelsea Chenin Blanc NV 13 ~£5.00
Soapy and ripely rich. Needs food.

CWS WHITE

Cape Chenin Blanc, Oak Aged 1999, Co-op 13 ~£5.00

Cape French Oak Chardonnay 1999, Co-op 13 ~£5.00

Cape Indaba Chardonnay 1998 13 ~£5.00
Superstores only.

Elephant Trail Colombard/Chardonnay 2000, Co-op 14 ~£3.50
Odd effect, but oddly appealing fruitwise. It is a little blatant, true, so it needs rich food – scallops perhaps with a creamy curry sauce (mild).

Fairview Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5–7

Hints of woodsmoke, oak, yoghurt and fresh under-ripe melon. A classic new world Chardy in a rich textured cardie. Superstores only.

First Release Chardonnay 2000 13.5 £5.00
Very ripe and obvious, but food will tame it – oriental food especially. Superstores only.

French Quarter Semillon 1999, Co-op 14.5 £5.00
Delicious nutty riches. Lingering, warm, refreshing and energetic.

Goiya Kgeisje Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 2000 15 £5.00
A lovely blend of soft fruit and crisp acids where ogen melon and pineapple/lemon freshness connect well

Long Mountain Semillon Chardonnay 1998 14 £5.00
Very dry finish. Needs fish

Oak Village Sauvignon Blanc 1999 13 £5.00
Odd almost-stalkiness and grassiness which doesn't quite ignite the taste buds. Superstores only.

Spice Route Chenin Blanc 1998 16 £7.10
Fat but far from out of condition or flabby. Has a lush peachy ripeness relieved by a lovely texture and nutty-edged acidity. Not at all stores.

Stowells South African Chenin Blanc NV 13 £5.00
Soapy and ripely rich. Needs food.

Waterside White Colombard Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5.00
Bargain elegance and subtle richness here. Superstores only.

M&S WHITE

Cape Country Chenin Blanc 2000 14.5 £5.00
Crisp and gooseberryish to open, then goes soft and ripe as it finishes. Dry and engagingly fruity.

Cape Country Colombard 2000 13.5 £5.00
Extremely gung-ho fruity.

Perdeberg Sauvignon Blanc 2000 14 £5.00
Very clean and engagingly fresh and charming.

MAJESTIC WHITE

De Wetshof Estate 'Lesca' Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5–7
Great elegance and gently woody, creamy richness here – of lingering depth and style. The best Lesca for some years. A fine Cape Chardonnay of complexity and real worth.

Franschoek Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 1998 12 £5.00
Bit odd. Touch crazy. Bit fantastical. Nor normal enough for me.

Kumala Semillon Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
Bargain richness and stealth here. Has melony ripeness well balanced by fresh hard fruit acids.

MORRISONS WHITE

Danie de Wet Chardonnay Surlie 1999 15 £5.00
Strikes a delicate balance between dryness and melony richness.

Faircape Chenin Blanc 15.5 –£3.50
2000
A thundering great bargain: apricot edged, lemon touched, tightly knitted texture.

Fairview Chardonnay 16.5 £5–7
1998
Has a burnt rubber aroma, lovely creamy fruit with a hint of lemon and ripe ogen melon, and a beautiful finish.

Namaqua Classic Dry 15 £5–7
White NV (3 litre box)
Delicious, crisp gooseberry and lemon fruit. A real class act: refreshing, bold, well tailored. Price band is for the 75cl equivalent.

Spice Route Abbotsdale 16 –£5.00
Colombard/Chenin
Blanc 1998
Very subtle but vibrant and sensual in its delicious fruity finish.

Van Loveren Blanc de 14 –£5.00
Noirs 2000
A delicious cherry/raspberry aperitif.

Van Loveren Pinot Gris 14 –£5.00
1999
Touch of peach to the very dry fruit.

Van Loveren Semillon 14 –£5.00
1999
Dry and fish friendly.

ODDBINS WHITE

Boschkloof Chardonnay 13 £5–7
Reserve 1997

Buitenverwachting 16 £7–10
Chardonnay, Constantia
1998
Very lingering and ambitious. Constraint by the fruit permits lovely acidic intrusion. Delicate overall.

Buitenverwachting Rhine 15 £5–7
Riesling, Constantia 1999
Lovely honey and mineral fruit. Wonderful fish wine.

Buitenverwachting 16 £7–10
Sauvignon Blanc,
Constantia 1999
A brilliant fish wine when the occasion calls for elegance, grassiness and perfect balance.

Danie de Wet 15 –£5.00
Chardonnay sur Lie,
Robertson 2000
One of Oddbins' bargain elegances. Lovely demure melon/lemon fruit.

Eikendal Chardonnay, 14 £7–10
Stellenbosch 1998

Fair Valley Bush Vine 15.5 –£5.00
Chenin Blanc, Coastal
Region 1999

Fairview Akkerbos 16.5 £7–10
Chardonnay, Paarl 1999
Seems fat and buttery then goes meltingly crisp and subtly lemony with a hint of yoghurt. Lovely wine.

Fairview Chardonnay 16.5 £5–7
1999
The most elegant Chardonnay in the Cape for the money. Beautiful balance of elements and a lingering, yoghurty finish.

Fairview Cyril Back 16 £5–7
Semillon, Paarl 1998
Hugely lingering yoghurt/raspberry/melon/lime fruit. Quite delicious. The delicacy of the impact is impressive and very, very classy.

Fairview Goats do Roam 16 –£5.00
Rosé 2000
The best rosé under a fiver in the land.

Fairview 'Oom Pagel' Semillon, Paarl 1999 16.5 £5–7
Utterly compelling fruit, rather magical for 100% Semillon, a little mysterious and richly engaging.

Fairview Viogner, Paarl 2000 16 £7–10
Tinged with peach and apricot and a hint of pineapple plus lemony acids. Terrific stuff. Fine Wine Stores only.

Glen Carlou Chardonnay 1999 14 £7–10
Fat, very fat. Waddles across the taste buds.

Glen Carlou Reserve Chardonnay 1997 12 £10–13

Ken Forrester Scholtzenhof Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 1998 14 £5–7

Klein Constantia Chardonnay 1998 15.5 £7–10

Klein Constantia Riesling 1998 13.5 £5.00

Klein Constantia Sauvignon Blanc 1998 15.5 £5–7

Longridge Bay View Chardonnay, Western Cape 1998 14 £5.00

Longridge Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1998 13.5 £7–10

Radford Dale Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1999 16 £7–10
How to impress by stealth not wealth.

Saxenburg Private Collection Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1998 16.5 £7–10
Has a croissant-edged richness of huge charm. Lovely texture here.

Scholtzenhof Petit Chenin, Stellenbosch 1999 15.5 £5.00

Slayley Chardonnay 1997 15.5 £7–10
Fine Wine Stores only.

Stellenzicht Sauvignon Blanc, Stellenbosch 1998 13.5 £5–7

Stellenzicht Semillon Reserve, Stellenbosch 1998 15 £7–10

Ten Fifty Six Blanc Fume, Franschoek 1998 13.5 £5.00
Odd acids. Don't quite add up to the fruit

Ten Fifty Six Chardonnay, Paarl 1998 14 £5–7
Lovely aroma and initial attack but goes a bit walkabout on the finish.

Vergelegen Reserve Chardonnay 1997 16.5 £7–10
Always one of the Cape's most elegant Chardonnays statements. A magical Meursault-like wine!!

Von Ortloff Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Very thickly textured and smooth and has an effortless richness to it.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Douglas Green Sauvignon 2000 15.5 £5.00
Has a gentle elegance with a hint of gooseberry fool.

First Release Chardonnay 2000 13.5 £5.00
A dry but coy Chardonnay.

First Release Chenin Blanc 2000 14 £5.00
Fresh and full of charm.

Sea of Serenity Dry Muscat 2000 14 —£3.50
Exactly what it says: serene, dry, muscat-edged fruit. A fine little aperitif.

Vale of Peace Colombard 2000 14 —£5.00
Charming, low key, but charming.

Versus 1999 (1 litre) 16 —£5.00
Very classy and collected. Lovely subtle fleshy fruit with incisive acids. Price bracket adjusted to the 75cl equivalent.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Call of the African Eagle Chardonnay 1999 17 £5–7
Beautifully natural and pure-seeming – as elegant as a nun's wimple. The fruit is quite remarkably refined and rich, complex, seamlessly stitched and elegant. 120 stores

Gioya Kgeisje Chardonnay/Sauvignon 2000 14 —£5.00
Very fruity! So fruity it begs for Thai/Chinese food. Most stores.

Rhona Muscadel 1996 16 £5–7
Wonderful textured syrupy richness of concentrated sweetness and ripeness. Pour it over ice cream or drink it with raspberries and cream. 70 stores.

South African Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's 14 —£5.00
Demure and rather restrained

South African Chenin Blanc NV, Sainsbury's 15 —£3.50
Very modern so it's a little flushed but it isn't embarrassing. Most stores.

South African Chenin Blanc NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box) 14.5 —£3.50
Not your big rich Chenin but a good dry mouthful of solid fruitiness which never tires or goes flabby. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle

South African Colombard NV, Sainsbury's 14 —£5.00

South African Medium White NV, Sainsbury's 13 —£3.50
Strictly for those seeking an alternative to Liebfraumilch. Most stores

South African Reserve Selection Chardonnay 1999, Sainsbury's 15.5 £5–7
Warm and very comfortable for the tongue to wear. Richly textured and thickly knitted. Most stores.

Springfield Estate Methode Ancienne Chardonnay 1999 15.5 £10–13
Very warm and unabrasively forward but relents on the finish to provide some understated easy going richness. 30 stores.

Vergelegen Chardonnay 1999 16 £5–7
Really lingers lushly. A finger-lickin' good Chardonnay but not, for all that richness, OTT or inelegant. It's just unconscionably gluggable. 100 selected stores

Vergelegen Chardonnay Reserve 1998 16.5 £7–10
Superb aplomb and buttery, gently smoky richness. A lush yet delicate wine of great class and concentrated style. 30 selected stores

Vergelegen Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 1999 17.5 £7–10
Outpoints Sancerre at the same price by ten to one. It's subtly grassy, very concentrated (melon and soft, spiced gooseberry) and the finish is sublime.
30 stores

Waterside White Chardonnay Colombard 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
Great blend of exuberance and delicacy. Has rich melon fruit and quiet acids well knitted in.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Bellingham Sauvignon Blanc 1999 15.5 ~£5.00

Bush Vines Semillon 1999, Somerfield 14 ~£5.00
Very rich and well textured. Great with robust food

Kumala Sauvignon Blanc/Colombard 1999 15.5 ~£5.00
An impressive blend of grapes providing depth and deftness. Well tailored, perfectly under-ripe and fresh-edged yet fruity. Limited distribution.

Millennium Early Release Chenin Blanc 2000 14 £3.50
Very crisp and refreshing.

South African Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 14 ~£5.00
Warm and rich and very satisfyingly packed with flavour.

South African Colombard 1999, Somerfield 14.5 ~£5.00
Tasty undertone of ripe melon harnessed to neat acids. Excellent fish wine.

SPAR WHITE

Chiwara Colombard/Sauvignon 1998, Spar 12.5 £5.00

South African Classic Chardonnay 1998, Spar 12 £5–7
Classic? In what way? Rather ragged fruit which fades fast.

TESCO WHITE

African Legend Colombard 1999 14 ~£5.00
Slightly spicy approach, good with oriental food

Arniston Bay Chenin/Chardonnay 1999 13 ~£5.00
Touch gooey on the finish – oddly defined.

Arniston Bay Rosé 2000 13 ~£5.00
Dry but straining at the cherries to be riper

Boschendal Grande Cuvee Sauvignon Blanc 1998 13.5 £5–7

Cape Chenin Blanc NV, Tesco 15 ~£3.50
Brilliant nutty and ripe melon and gooseberry fruit. Has a delicious creamy finish. Superb for drinks parties and for first courses at nose-in-the-air dinner parties.

Fairview Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5–7
Hints of woodsmoke, oak, yoghurt and fresh under-ripe melon. A classic new world Chardy in a rich textured cardie

Firefinch Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 ~£5.00
Interesting herbaceous richness. Very

dry and slightly intimidating with its compressed, stalky, under-ripe gooseberry fruit. But great with fish, smoked or poached, and superb with shellfish. Amazing price for such class. 100 selected stores only.

Goiya Kgeisje 2000 13 ~~£5.00~~
A lovely blend of soft fruit and crisp acids where ogen melon and pineapple/lemon freshness connect well.

Kumala Colombard/ Chardonnay 1999 14.5 ~~£5.00~~
Hint of agreeable fatness to the ripe melon gives it an easy drinking feel of no pretension but to refresh the palate for more.

Oak Village Sauvignon Blanc 1999 13 ~~£5.00~~
Odd almost-stalkiness and grassiness which doesn't quite ignite the taste buds.

Ryland's Grove Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 1999 16 ~~£5.00~~
One of the best value whites on Tesco's shelves: rich, dry, balanced, peachy/melony/nutty and with a generous finish. At most stores.

Rylands Grove Dry Muscat 1999 13.5 ~~£5.00~~
Most stores.

Rylands Grove Sauvignon Blanc 2000 14.5 ~~£5.00~~
Good fresh edge of pressed gooseberries with an undertone of lemon. Pet little performer.

South African Chardonnay/Colombard NV, Tesco 14 ~~£5.00~~
Charmingly bumptious and full of itself (which is ripe melon with a hint of woodsmoke).

South African Medium Sweet White NV, Tesco 13 ~~£3.50~~
Anyone who likes Liebfraumilch can cheerfully spend less on this.

South African Reserve Chardonnay 1999, Tesco 13.5 ~~£5.00~~
Good up front but falls away a touch on the finish, then gathers momentum and just about sneaks home. I must say I find the reserve designation hyperbole.

South African White, Tesco 14 ~~£3.50~~

Spice Route Long Walk Sauvignon Blanc 1998 16 ~~£5.7~~
Hint of earthy minerals and concentrated gooseberries. Excellent structure and depth.

Third Millennium Chenin Chardonnay 1999 13 ~~£5.00~~
Blue bottle though the fruit is a little lacking in sting

Van Loveren Blanc de Noir Red Muscadel Rosé 2000 14 ~~£3.50~~
A very delicate aperitif showing ripe cherries in spouting form.

THRESHER WHITE

African Legend Sauvignon Blanc 1998 13 ~~£5.2~~
Touch musty. Bottoms Up only.

Capells Court Chardonnay 1998 14 ~~£5.7~~
Needs Thai food, I fancy. The creamy richness plus the energy of the acids are made for grilled flying fish on a

bed of Ojumpula nettles. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Carisbrook Chenin/ Chardonnay 1999 14 £5.00

Hartenberg 'Occasional' Auxerrois 1997 16 £5–7
Tremendous flavour and style here. A quirkily rich, Chardonnay-style wine of complexity and real lengthy flavour. A thought provokingly fruity wine. Not at Thresher Wine Shops.

Hartenberg 'Occasional' Bush Vine Chenin Blanc 1997 15.5 £5–7

Hartenberg 'Occasional' Pinot Blanc 1997 15 £5–7

Hartenberg Weisser Riesling,Stellenbosch 1997 13 £5–7

Oak Village Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5.00
Chewy finish which dissipates the hard work of the fruit.

Villiera Chenin Blanc 1997 15 £5.00

UNWINS WHITE

Bellingham Chardonnay 1999 15 £5–7
Very forward, creamy, smoky and hugely food friendly.

Cape Chardonnay 1999 13 £5.00
Too adolescent, obvious and unsubtle for me. Like the juice from a fruit salad.

Cape White 1999 13.5 £5.00

Cathedral Cellar Chardonnay 1997 15.5 £7–10
Perfectly delicious and unpretentious. Has superb unfussy melony fruit.

Coastline Chenin Blanc 2000 13.5 £5.00

Fairview Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5–7
The most elegant Chardonnay in the Cape for the money. Beautiful balance of elements and a lingering, yoghurty finish.

Jordan Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 1999 16.5 £5–7
Bargain apricot richness and plumpness of expression. Rarely does Chenin perform such tricks.

Jordan Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1998 16.5 £7–10
Very complex, modern, creamy and rich – but subtle and polished with it. Beautiful texture and class here.

L'Avenir Chenin Blanc 1998 15.5 £5–7
Impish, decisive, richly chiming, fluted fruit.

Vergelegen Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Has a hard edge but a soft heart. The effect is glorious, entertaining, rich, stylish, deep, delicious.

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

African Legend Sauvignon Blanc 1998 13 £5–7
Touch musty.

Capells Court Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
Hint of spicy melon on the finish rounds off a rousing performance from a gorgeously textured and tightly

woven specimen of top notch quaffing.

Oak Village Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5.00
Chewy finish which dissipates the hard work of the fruit.

WAITROSE WHITE

Culemborg Cape Dry White 1999 14 £3.50
Bargain party plonk.

Culemborg Unwooded Chardonnay, Western Cape 1999 15 £5.00
Great value here, especially if fish is on your plate.

Fairview Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 1999 16 £5.00
Superb style and acidity meet Cape richness and fruity depth.

Spice Route Abbotsdale Colombard/Chenin Blanc 1999 15 £7.10
Rich and very fit for food.

Springfield Sauvignon Blanc Special Cuvee 1999 15.5 £5.7

Steenberg Sauvignon Blanc 1999 16 £7–10
Either a Sauvignon lover's nightmare or a complex wet dream come true. The wine has celery, gooseberry, hashish and buttercup overtones and it's crisp to finish.

Thelema Mountain Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 1999 17 £10–13
Perfect herbaceous undertone to beautifully multi-layered fruit of massive charm. Only from Waitrose Direct

Warwick Estate Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1999 17.5 £5–7
The best value Chardonnay in the world. Lovely creamy woodiness, alert acids underpinning good melon/vegetal fruit and it'll get more like Montrachet as it ages over the next five years.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Jordan Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £7–10
Melon and lime yoghurt with a hint of walnut. An individual approach to the Chardonnay riddle and an original solution. Deliciously so.

SOUTH AMERICA

Please see Chile and Argentina for the two partners in this sort of wine which, though not common, does offer a few examples created by blending wines from each of these Andean neighbours.

TESCO RED

Two Tribes Red 13.5 £5.00

TESCO WHITE

Two Tribes White 13.5 £5.00

SPAIN

Spain is suffering from similar social upheavals as Italy. In 1999 a wine producer in the Toro region told me that when he was a boy the average per capita wine consumption was nearly seventy litres a year and now it was less than thirty. This is why so many UK wine pros are touring the vineyards and snapping up bargains. Spain must export to survive as a meaningful world-class exporter and producer. It is easily the most creatively dynamic of the European superpowers (and not just in football and architecture); it is in tremendous form as a creator of complex, fascinating red and white wines Its full potential in these respects is far away from being realised. Even greater days, and affordable wines, are ahead.

ASDA RED

Baron de Ley Reserva Rioja 1994 13 £5–7

Conde de Navasques 1997 15.5 £5.00

Don Darias Tinto NV 15.5 £3.50
Off to the Greek taverna? Going to a dinner party in Hampstead? Bring along the Don – he's getting soft and fruity with age and his tannic side is well developed

Fuentespina Crianza 1996 15.5 £7.10

Mont Marcal Crianza 1997 14 £5.00
Very cheering fruit. Puts a smile on your face.

Oaked Tempranillo 1998, Asda 16 £5.00
Superb value here. Really engaging tannins, expensively furnished and upholstered, and the fruit is warm, ripe, aromatic and deliciously soft.

Rioja NV, Asda 14.5 £5.00

Spanish Oaked Red NV, Asda 13 £3.50

Valdepeñas Crianza 1995 15.5 £5.00

Viña Albali Gran Reserva 1991 16 £5–7
Terrific grilled meat wine – anything from boar to Toulouse sausage. It's ripe, vanilla-tinged, dry yet full, nicely textured, warmly tannin-undertoned and very friendly. Better than many Riojas.

BOOTHS RED

Amant Tinto de Toro 1999 15.5 £5.00
Delicious savoury fruit, plump texture, and a wonderful smooth finish.

Casa de la Viña 14.5 £5.00
Valdepeñas 1999
A juicy creamy wine – has tannins but the fruit rules.

Casa Morena, Valdepeñas 14 £3.50
NV

Castillo de Almansa 15.5 £5.00
Reserva Bodegas
Piqueras 1994
Perfect weight and maturity of very gently burned plum fruit with a very subtle touch of spice.

Mas Collet Capcanes 16.5 £5–7
Tarragona 1998
Delicious personality where ripe tannins and rich fruit and great acids combine rather thrillingly.

Mas Donis Capcanes 16 £5.00
Taragona 1999
Huge, mouthfilling, soft (yet gently dry and rich), beautifully textured and finishes with style and wit. Very smooth overall

Ochoa Tempranillo 15 £5.00
Garnacha 1999
Lovely tobacco-edged fruit with a warm undertone of baked bread.

Rioja Crianza Amezola 12 £7–10
1996
Super-ripe and raisiny. Only food can give it stature.

Scraping the Barrel 14.5 £3.50
Tempranillo, Utiel-
Requena NV

Simply Spanish Soft Red 9 £2.50
NV
Quite revolting.

Viña Alarba, Calatayud 15.5 £3.50
1998

Viña Albali Gran Reserva 15 £5–7
1993
Very ripe, raisiny and deep and a great red for game dishes.

BUDGENS RED

Diego de Almagro 15 £5.00
Valdepeñas 1996
Wonderful pasta and pizza red: sunny, ripe, thick and generous.

Palacio de la Vega 15.5 £5.00
Cabernet Sauvignon/
Tempranillo 1996

Palacio de la Vega 15.5 £5–7
Crianza 1997
Getting ripe but perfect for that Christmas fowl, gravy sodden and spicily stuffed (just like the wine).

Viña Albali Gran Reserva 15 £5–7
1993
Very ripe, raisiny and deep and a great red for game dishes.

CWS RED

Berberana Dragon 15 £5.00
Tempranillo 1998
Brilliant food wine with its plummy directness and ascendant tannins.

Berberana Rioja Reserva 12 £7–10
1995
Very juicy and creamy.

Berberana Rioja Viura 13.5 £5.00
1997
A little on the boring side for four fifty. Superstores only

Chestnut Gully 15.5 £5.00
Monastrell-Merlot 1998

Rioja Tinto, Viña Gala NV, Co-op 13.5 ~~£5.00~~
A juicy red for Indian non-delicacies.

Tempranillo Oak Aged NV, Co-op 13 ~~£3.50~~

Tierra Sana Organic Wine 1999, Co-op 17 ~~£5.00~~
A thrilling organic, unfiltered wine of huge substance and thrillingly deep and all-enveloping fruit which is absurdly inexpensive. Lovely savoury bouquet, big blackcurrant and cherry fruit and a lushly tannic finish. A real beaut of a bargain.

Torres Gran Sangre de Toro Reserva 1996 16 ~~£5-7~~
Delicious, dry, classic, elegant (yet robust), complex as it dies out in the throat, and a lot of richness and warm character. Superstores only.

KWIK SAVE RED

Bodegas Castano Monastrell Merlot 1999 16.5 ~~£5.00~~
Totally convincing! Utterly extraordinary quality tannins and velvet and leather fruit.

d'Avalos Tempranillo 1997 15 ~~£3.50~~

Don Darias Red NV 15.5 ~~£5.00~~
Off to the Greek taverna? Going to a dinner party in Hampstead? Bring along the Don – he's getting soft and fruity with age and his tannic side is well developed.

Flamenco Red NV 11 ~~£3.50~~

Los Molinos Tempranillo, Valdepeñas/Oak Aged 1993 15.5 ~~£3.50~~

Modernista Tempranillo 1997 16 ~~£3.50~~
Brilliant summer bargain for the barbecue! Has rich fluid fruit, developed and deep, and terrific tannins. Modern indeed!

Pergola Tempranillo 1999, Somerfield 15 ~~£5.00~~
Gorgeous texture and ripeness. Surges with flavour and interesting nuances.

Rioja Crianza 1997, Somerfield 14 ~~£5.00~~
Juicy yet earthy. Great with a chicken stew with choriza

Teja Tempranillo Cabernet 1997 14.5 ~~£3.50~~

M&S RED

Campo Ran 1999 14 ~~£5.00~~
A great party wine. Give 'em something rich and ripe to talk about

Las Falleras 1999 14 ~~£3.50~~
A bargain for large parties of pasta eaters. Dry, earthy but a little pleasingly plump, and properly balanced

Marisa 1999 16 ~~£5.00~~
Baked, savoury fruit with a tobacco undertone. Lovely warmth to the texture. Terrific food wine.

Rioja Roseral 1996 13.5 ~~£5-7~~
Dry yet fruitily jammy. Not a typical rioja (a good thing).

Sotelo 1996 15.5 ~~£5-7~~
Delicious earthy/mineral richness and ripeness here. A wine for candlelight and soft music.

MAJESTIC RED

Artadi Viñas de Gain Rioja 1997 15 £7–10
A food wine because it has a quirky imbalance in its personality where a certain sourness predominates. With food however, it would be impressive.

Arva Vitis Tempranillo 1998 15.5 £5.00
Strictly for tannin lovers or those needing to summon up the blood.

Berberana Dragon Tempranillo 1998 15 £5.00
Brilliant food wine with its plummy directness and ascendant tannins.

Costers del Gravet Celler de Capcanes 1998 17 £7–10
Huge yet delicate, expansive yet lithe, effortless yet eager-to-delight. A very concentrated, compelling amalgam of multi-layered fruit, fine tannins and superb acids which all work dynamically to produce a rousing, tenacious finish.

Finca Lasendal, Celler de Capcanes 1999 15.5 £5.00
Stewed fruitiness gives way to dry, tannin richness on the finish.

'G' Dehesa Gago Telmo Rodriguez 1998 16 £5–7
The bullish wit of the label does nothing to prepare you for the surprise of the earthy riches in the bottle. Rustic? Only a touch. Knitted edges yet power.

Marques de Grinon Rioja 1997 15 £5–7

Marques de Murietta Rioja Reserva 1995 14 £7–10

Mas Collet Celler de Capcanes 1998 18.5 £5–7
Stunning heaviness of effect, like Wagner. Wonderful richness and glamorous tannins so well-knitted that the seams are invisible. A moving, soulful experience.

Muga Rioja Reserva 1995 13 £7.10
Bit juicy for ten quid.

Ochoa Tempranillo Garnache Navarra 1998 15 £5.00

Viña Armantes Garnacha 1999 15 £5.00
Sweet baked edge of plummy fruit is a perfect pasta accompaniment.

Viña El Salado Extremadura 1998 15 £5.00

MORRISONS RED

Conforrales Tinto Cencibel 1998 15 £3.50
Bargain acidity. Lush tannins and a dry charcoal edge.

De Muller Pinot Noir 1996 13 £7–10
Not typical Pinot, very rich and sticky.

Gran Feudo Navarra Crianza 1997 13 £5.00
Very juicy and bruised fruity.

'M' Red Rioja NV 13 £5.00
Sweet and sour sauce for Indian food.

Rio Rojo Tinto NV 14 £3.50

Stowells Tempranillo NV (3 litre box) 12.5 £3.50
Price bracket reflects 75cl equivalent.

Torres Sangre de Toro 1998 14 £5–7
Ripe yet dry.

Vega del Rio Reserve Rioja 1994 13 £2–10
Very mature, too pricey.

Viña Albali Gran Reserva 1991 16 £5–7
Vanillary, spicy, nicely warmly textured and softly, savourily tannic. Has an almost yoghurt touch on the finish

Viña Albali Tempranillo 1999 15.5 –£4.50
Slightly creamy, very subtly vanillary fruit with assertive tannins. Excellent roast meat/veg/casserole wine. Terrific price.

ODDBINS RED

Artadi Orobio Tempranillo, Rioja 1999 16 £5–7
One of the more gripping riojas. Distinguished and deliciously tannic.

Bodegas Palacio Glorioso Crianza Rioja 1997 14.5 £5–7
Very smooth on the finish.

Cosme Palacio y Hermanos, Rioja 1997 16 £5–7
Always one of the more elegantly compact Riojas.

Costers del Gravet Red, Capcanes 1998 17.5 £7–10
Quite stunning ripeness and tannic tenacity of very complex richness offering a variety of delightful sensations from its medley of fruit to its final bequest of lingering herbiness.

Dardell Negre, Gandesa 1999 15.5 –£5.00
Gorgeous rich tannins, deep burned fruit and a very generous finish.

La Cata Tempranillo, La Mancha 1998 14 –£5.00

La Vicalanda de Viña Pomal Reserva, Rioja 1995 13 £10–13

Olivares Dulce Monastrell 1996 16 £13–20
'Almost tastes like a dish in itself,' said Karen at Oddbins, and she's right. This is a stickily sweet red which will go with fruit cake, a hangover, a hospital cure for a blue mood, and it'll even waken the dead palate. It is never monodimensional and simply gooey – rather, it's textured, multi layered and teasing. Great with blue cheese.

Piedemonte Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon, Navarra 1998 15 –£5.00

Raimat Tempranillo, Costers del Segre 1997 16.5 £7–10
Ripe, stylishly smooth and rounded, delicious plum/strawberry/blackberry undertones and a gorgeous textured finish.

Taja Gran Reserva, Jumilla 1994 16 £7–10
Very juicy and ripe but with lovely lingering tannins. Huge presence on the taste buds. Great food wine

Taja Jumilla 1999 15 –£5.00
Bargain fruit here – deep, herby, rich, strikingly dry and tannic – and very lingering richness.

SAFEWAY RED

Ceremonia, Utiel Requena 1996 16.5 £7–10
Stunning class here. Loads of woody flavours, hedgerow and orchard fruits

and superb tannins. It's a very potent red. 48 stores.

Cruz de Piedra Garnacha Calatayud 1999 14 ~£5.00
A superb wine for all Indian meat and fish dishes. It's slightly sweet and very deeply textured.

Navasques Navarra 1999 14 ~£5.00
Sweet and dry. The usual suspects can be rounded up to accompany it.

Valdepeñas Reserva Aged in Oak 1995, Safeway 15 ~£5.00
Very creamy, woody fruit which suits highly spiced food.

SAINSBURY'S RED

Alteza 600 Old Vines Garnacha NV 16 ~£5.00
Burnt leaves and ripe plums, dry tannins, vivid acidity and fruit balance. Superb for food or mood. Selected stores

Alteza 750 Tempranillo NV 16 ~£5.00
Why drink expensive Rioja when there is this compelling reason to spend so much less? Gorgeously rich fruit which stays firm and dry even as it strikes with such vivacity. Most stores.

Alteza 775 Tempranillo Cabernet Sauvignon NV 16 ~£5.00
The juicy style of Cabernet, vivacious and deep, but it has solid tannins to give it serious presence in the mouth. Most stores.

Classic Selection Rioja Reserva 1996, Sainsbury's 12 £7–10
Too old and raisiny for me. Most stores

Dama de Toro 1999 16.5 ~£5.00
Stunning tenacity to the fruit - it won't leave hold of the molars. Thus, you feel your soul is lifted. Most stores

Enate Cabernet Merlot 1998 16.5 £5–7
Sweet cherries and plums (gently warmed through) on the finish – and they linger. But the overture is beautifully savoury and ripe – and stylishly smooth and finely textured. Not at all stores

Jumilla NV, Sainsbury's 15.5 ~£5.00

Marques de Vitoria Rioja Crianza 1995 (organic) 13.5 £7–10
Very juicy. Great with Indian food. Selected stores.

Navarra NV, Sainsbury's 16 ~£5.00
Superb bargain. Lovely tobacco-edged fruit, classy and rich, with loads of freshness and depth behind it. Terrific quaffing wine.

Navarra Tempranillo/Cabernet Sauvignon Crianza 1995, Sainsbury's 16 ~£5.00
Wonderful mature fruit here: tobaccoey, ripe, rich, deep, woody, balanced and very eager to please. Loads of class.

Old Vines Garnacha, Navarra NV 15.5 ~£5.00

Stowells of Chelsea Tempranillo NV (3 litre box) 13 ~£3.50
Has a hint of unshaven stubble still left on the cheeks of the fruit and it tickles as it quits the throat. Very dry. The price band reflects the equivalent price for a 75cl bottle.

Torres Gran Sangre de Toro 1996 16 £5–7

The fruit has a lovely coating of tannins which restrains its friskiness. A jammy wine of paradoxically dry, serious, almost glumly joyous finish. Delicious, compelling, hugely friendly.

Valencia Oak Aged NV, Sainsbury's 13.5 £5.00

Viña Albali Gran Reserva 1993 15 £5–7
Vanillary and super-ripe, dry and tenacious, it excels with robust foods.
Most stores

Viña Ardanza Rioja Reserva 1994 13.5 £10–12
Expensive, raisiny, very ripe, very old-fashioned, very expensive. Selected stores.

SOMERFIELD RED

Bodegas Castano Monastrell Merlot 1999 16.5 £5.00
Totally convincing! Utterly extraordinary quality tannins and velvet and leather fruit.

Bright Brothers Old Vines Navarra Garnacha 1998 14 £5.00
Very ripe and all embracing. Has a touch of peach and strawberry yoghurt on the finish.

Don Darias Red NV 15.5 £5.00
Off to the Greek taverna? Going to a dinner party in Hampstead? Bring along the Don - he's getting soft and fruity with age and his tannic side is well developed.

Pergola Tempranillo 1999, Somerfield 15 £5.00
Gorgeous texture and ripeness. Surges with flavour and interesting nuances.

Rioja Crianza 1997, Somerfield 14 £5.00
Juicy yet earthy. Great with a chicken stew with chorizo.

Sierra Alta Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5.00
Terrific! Lovely rich ripe cherry/blackcurrant fruit. Great texture and warmth of finish. Terrifically soft and quaffable.

Valencia Red NV, Somerfield 14 £3.50
Brilliantly thick and chewy fruit, rich and clinging. Even dares to fling tannins at you.

SPAR RED

Perfect for Parties Red NV, Spar (1 litre) 10 £3.50
Willy Hague's wine (his party will love it): insignificant, not hair-raising, squeaky voiced and pretending to something it isn't. Price band is for the 75cl equivalent.

Valencia Soft Red NV, Spar 14 £3.50
Good plummy fruit, soft texture, alert tannins. A pleasant mouthful.

TESCO RED

Campillo Gran Reserva Rioja 1989 10 £13–20
Absurd price, which only a madman would pay. Yes, the wine's very mature and ripely slurpable but it does not possess the wit to demand fifteen pounds. To think you can buy five bottles of Tesco's Reka Valley Pinot Noir for the same money, and receive a much more thrilling mouthful, only

makes my point with greater emphasis.

Campillo Reserva Rioja 1995 13 £10–15
Immensely pleasurable to drink, but not to splash out eleven quid on.

Carnesi Garnacha/Tempranillo Calatayud 1998 16 £5.00
Superb richness of the earthy variety. Great gobbets of blackcurrant and plum. 100 selected stores.

Don Darias NV 15.5 £5.00
Off to the Greek taverna? Going to a dinner party in Hampstead? Bring along the Don – he's getting soft and fruity with age and his tannic side is well developed.

Espiral Moristel Tempranillo/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 £5.00
It's the blackcurrant jam richness which startles – but it's dry and herby. Tannins and tenacity, style and utter drinkability – a lovely wine.

Huge Juicy Red, Tesco 13.5 £5.00
Doesn't quite live up to its billing since it is medium sized rather than huge, but it is juicy. Best drunk with curries where its sweetness is best appreciated.

Marques de Chive Reserva 1994, Tesco 14.5 £5.00

Marques de Chive Tempranillo NV, Tesco 15 £3.50
The tannins give the coconut-edged fruit some real backbone. An excellent food wine. Great with anything from fish stew to chicken casserole.

Marques de Grinon Rioja 1997 15 £5.00

Muruve Crianza 1996 15.5 £5–7

Orobio Tempranillo Rioja 1998 13 £5–7

Piedmonte Merlot Tempranillo 1998 14 £5.00

Priorat l'Agnet 1998 14 £5–7
Top 85 stores.

Senorio de los Llanos Valdepeñas Gran Reserva 1994 14 £5.00
Rioja taste-alike with the woody and vanillary fruit being so forward. This kind of attack I can only find drinkable with robust food, at which encounter the wine comes into its own.

Senorio de los Llanos Valdepeñas Reserva 1996 14 £5.00
Nicely mature and ripe but the tannins ensure it stays on track. So much better value than so many Riojas.

Viña Azbache Rioja 1998 15.5 £5.00
Terrific gentle fruit with loads of stylish tannins and a complex layered finish.

Viña Mara Gran Reserva Rioja 1990, Tesco 13.5 £7–10
Very jammy and creamy for a tenner.

Viña Mara Rioja Alavesa 1998, Tesco 16 £5–7
A simply terrific Rioja. It just bounces with ripe, plump, dark fruit with lovely attendant tannins of savoury richness.

Viña Mara Rioja Reserva 1995, Tesco 15 £7–10
Very dry on the finish. Almost austerely so. At most stores.

Viña Mara Rioja, Tesco 14 £5.00

Viña Montana 16 £5.00
Monastrell/Merlot 1998
Superb texture here, classy, ripe and all enveloping and the soft tannins are yielding up meaty undertones.

THRESHER RED

Abadia Retuerta Rivola, Duero 1996 16.5 £5–7
One of the smartest red wines in Spain. Real elongated fruit, elegant reach, great balance of elements. Dry, delicious, decisive. Wine Rack only.

Alvaro Palacios Finca Dofi Priorat 1996 18 £20+
£60! Sixty quid!? Yes, but it may well be one of the most nigh-perfect red wines in Spain. It is hugely elegant and forceful. The tannins are like gold dust and the finish is sublime. A truly exciting world-class wine, the unique product of an obsessed individual. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Alvaro Palacios 'Les Terrasses' DO Priorat 1997 13.5 £13–20
Struggles to be good value and fails, but the tannins are outstanding – like biceps on a supermodel. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Baron de Ley Rioja Reserva 1996 13 £7–10
Begins well, then gets lost. Eight quid? Oh, come on.

Casa Rural Tinto NV 14.5 £3.50
Rural!? Oh yes. Rusticity vinified . . . but great with bouncy dishes.

Castillo Ygay Rioja Gran Reserva 1989 10 £13–20
So juicy the molars wince. Bottoms Up only.

Chivite Reserva, Gran Feudo, Navarra 1995 13.5 £5–7
Juicy with jaded tannins

Conde de Valdemar Rioja Crianza 1997 13.5 £5–7
Needs food. It's very juicy and the tannins are quite raw.

Conde de Valdemar Rioja Reserva 1995 14 £7–10
Getting old and juicy as the tannins slip away.

Contino Rioja Reserva 1995 15 £20+
Very expensive but with such sveltely textured and finely wrought tannins and fruit that it is of great quality. It has the feel of luxury cashmere. And it costs. Bottoms Up only.

Cune Reserva 1995 13.5 £7–10
Very odd woody edge to it. Nakedly arboreal. Needs food to explode into life. Bottoms Up only.

Dominio di Montalvo Rioja 1998 13 £5–7
I find it a touch sour as it sprints down the throat. Not as open as rioja could, or perhaps ought to, be.

El Meson Rioja NV 15 £5–7
Very juicy but has a finish with a hint of cigarillo. Needs food.

Finca Valpiedra Rioja 1995 12 £13–20
A seriously drinkable £5 wine, but at £19 it takes your breath and too much of your money away. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Jumilla Senorio de Robles 1998 15 £3.50
A bargain wine for summer barbecues as well as winter firesides. It's dry,

plummy, soft, characterful and hugely quaffable – and it'll go with loads of foods. Not at Wine Rack or Bottoms Up.

Marques de Aragon Garnacha 1998 15 £5.00
A marvellous curry wine: sweet/dry, plummy, rich, full of deep, delicious riches.

Marques de Grinon Rioja 1998 15.5 £5–7
As usual, the Marques continues to make benchmark Rioja at a sane price. A dry, serious, rich, elegant wine. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Marques de Grinon Rioja Reserva 1996 14 £7–10
For three pounds less, the non-reserva is a better wine (though less unashamedly tannic). Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Marques de Grinon Valdepusa Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 16.5 £7–10
Stunning development as it courses its way over the tongue. Complex, plump, soft, polished, dry yet full of charms. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Marques de Grinon Valdepusa Syrah 1997 17 £10–13
Makes many an Aussie construct via Shiraz seem junior league. A wonderfully exuberant, spiky wine which is seriously multi-faceted. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Marques de Murrieta Rioja Reserva Especial 1995 13 £13–20
Too brutal to rate any more at £15. Bottoms Up only.

Marques de Riscal Reserva 1996 14 £7–10
Claret with a touch of the sun and spice.

Navajas Rioja Crianza 1997 13.5 £5–7
Touch thin. For Navajas, this is most odd.

Ochoa Gran Reserva, Navarra 1992 14 £10–13
A lot of money, almost a lot of wine. Bottoms Up only.

Raimat Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 15 £7–10
Dry, vegetal edge, savoury richness to the fruit, decent, textured tightness of expression. Sounds grim? Gorgeous – with food. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Raimat Merlot 1996 15.5 £7–10
Develops on the taste buds as a fine wine has to, slowly evolving layers of texture, fruit and rich interest. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Remonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 15.5 £5.00
Combines a dry, vegetal side with a plummy ripe dimension. Gushes with flavour and urgency but still manages to keep respectably Cabernet.

Torres Gran Coronas 1996 17 £7–10
It combines the frisky tannins of a Haut-Medoc, the terracotta tension of a Chianti, the pulse of a Comas and the richness, sunnyness and depth of a sub-Pyreneean Cabernet. Perfect age to catch its boldness yet finesse. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up stores only.

Torres Gran Sangre de Toro 1996 16 £5–7

The fruit has a lovely coating of tannins which restrains its friskiness. A jammy wine of paradoxically dry, serious, almost glumly joyous finish. Delicious, compelling, hugely friendly. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up stores only.

Viña Real Gran Reserva 1988 13 £13–20
Has some pleasing tobacco touches but the price . . . Ouch! Bottoms Up only.

Viña Real Gran Reserva 1991 13.5 £13–20
Overpriced, underexciting. Bottoms Up only.

UNWINS RED

Castillo Perelada Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 13.5 £7–10
Touch expensive for the theme.

Conde de Valdemar Reserva 1995 14 £7–10
Getting old and juicy as the tannins slip away.

Cosme Palacio y Hermanos Rioja 1997 16 £5–7
Always one of the more elegantly compact Riojas.

Gran Vos Reserva 1995 15 £7–10

Marques de Grinon Tempranillo 1998 15 £5–7
One of the more confident Riojas and marvellous with chillied vegetable dishes with coriander and cardamom

Martinez Bujanda Gran Reserva 1993 13.5 £13–20
Expensive, ripe, ancient – yet nicely throat-tickling

Nekeas Barrel Fermented Merlot 1997 13.5 £5–7
Oddly raisiny-ripe edge suggests it'll only really amount to anything with rich food in the mouth.

Ochoa Tempranillo 1997 15 £5–7
Superb tannins here allied to strawberries and plums.

Tapon de Oro Garnacha 1998 12.5 £5–7

Valdepusa Cabernet Sauvignon Marques de Grinon 1997 16.5 £7–10
Sublime, if getting juicy, yet it has presence and impactful plummy fruit and well-cut tannins.

Viña Albali Reserva 1995 13 £5.00

Viñas del Vero Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16.5 £5–7
The tannins and the fruit in perfect harmony progress in stately yet vivid elegance over the taste buds creating delicious havoc.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Abadia Retuerta Rivola, Duero 1996 16.5 £5–7
One of the smartest red wines in Spain. Real elongated fruit, elegant reach, great balance of elements. Dry, delicious, decisive.

Baron de Ley Rioja Reserva 1996 13 £7–10
Begins well, then gets lost. Eight quid? Oh, come on.

Casa Rural Tinto NV 14.5 £3.50
Rural!? Oh yes. Rusticity vinified . . . but great with bouncy dishes

Chivite Navarra Viña Marcos 1997 13 ~£5.00
Touch thin. For Navajas, this is most odd

Chivite Reserva, Gran Feudo, Navarra 1995 13.5 £5–7
Juicy with jaded tannins.

Conde de Valdemar Rioja Crianza 1997 13.5 £5–7
Needs food. It's very juicy and the tannins are quite raw.

Conde de Valdemar Rioja Reserva 1995 14 £7–10
Getting old and juicy as the tannins slip away.

Dominio di Montalvo Rioja 1998 13 £5–7
I find it a touch sour as it sprints down the throat. Not as open as Rioja could, or perhaps ought to, be.

El Meson Rioja NV 15 £5–7
Very juicy but has a finish with a hint of cigarillo. Needs food.

Jumilla Senorio de Robles 1998 16 ~£3.50
A bargain wine for summer barbecues as well as winter firesides. It's dry, plummy, soft, characterful and hugely quaffable – and it'll go with loads of foods.

Marques de Aragon Garnacha 1998 15 ~£5.00
A marvellous curry wine: sweet/dry, plummy, rich, full of deep, delicious riches.

Marques de Riscal Reserva 1996 14 £7–10
Claret with a touch of the sun and spice.

Navajas Rioja Crianza 1997 13.5 £5–7
Touch thin. For Navajas, this is most odd

Remonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 15.5 ~£5.00
Combines a dry, vegetal side with a plummy ripe dimension. Gushes with flavour and urgency but still manages to keep respectably Cabernet.

WAITROSE RED

Agramont Tempranillo/ Cabernet Sauvignon, Navarra 1996 14.5 £5–7
Good alertness of tannins, decent cherry edge to the fruit.

Espiral Oaked Tempranillo 1998 15 £5–7
Rich and juicy, very modern and throat teasing.

Espiral Tempranillo/ Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 16 ~£5.00
Tobacco, tannins, concentration, class – plus character and bite. Terrific stuff.

La Rioja Alta Gran Reserve 904, 1989 13.5 £13–20

Torres Gran Sangre de Toro Reserva 1996 16 £5–7
Wonderful vintage of the old warhorse – the best for some time. Great tannins, herbs, richness of layered fruit and a striking finish

Totally Tinto Tempranillo, La Mancha NV 15 ~£3.50

Totally Two Thousand Tempranillo NV (magnum) 15.5 ~£3.50
Superbly adult brew of warmth and wit. Plummy fruit allied to great tannins. Fresh-edged and full of fun.

Viña Fuerte Garnacha, Calatayud 1999 16 £5.00
Astonishingly cultured, soft and yieldingly textured. Gorgeously ripe yet not over the top.

WINE CELLAR RED

Montalvo Reserva Rioja 1994 14.5 £7–10

Ondarre Reserva Rioja 1994 13 £7.10

Ondarre 'Rivallana' Crianza Rioja 1996 13 £5–7

Valdetore Calatayud Grenache 1998 15 £5.00
Delicious calm fruit, plum mostly with a touch of raspberry and appleskin. Excellent food wine.

Viñas del Vero Merlot 1997 15.5 £5–7
Juicy yet memorably rich and plump as it finishes, where it develops lingering nuances of vanilla, plum, spice and saccharin.

ASDA WHITE

Bodegas Cerrosol Sauvignon Rueda 1998 15 £5.00
Interesting and unusually soft Sauvignon which finishes crisply of concentrated gooseberries. Great with food

Moscatel de Valencia NV, Asda 16 £3.50
Brilliant sweet wine for crème brûlées, ice creams and fruit salad. Has a delicious undertone of marmalade.

Spanish Oaked White NV, Asda 13.5 £3.50

Castillo de Almansa 1998 16 £5.00
Huge presence and charisma here: crisp, clean, collected, consummately dry and delicate.

BOOTHS WHITE

Estrella, Moscatel de Valencia NV 16 £5.00
Superb muscat sweetness and hints of marmalade. Marvellous with ice cream.

Palacio de Bornos Rueda 1999 13 £5.00

Santa Lucia Viura, Vino de la Tierra Manchuela 1998 14 £3.50

Simply Spanish White NV 12 £2.50

BUDGENS WHITE

Castillo de Liria Moscatel de Valencia NV 15.5 £5.00
Delicious! Try it with ice cream – or even just pour it over it. Very subtly spiced honeyed fruit.

Viña Albali Rosado Tempranillo 1999 13 £5.00
Cherry-edged freshness.

CWS WHITE

Jaume Serra Chardonnay 1999 16 £5.00
From one of the unsung heroes of Catalan winemaking. A ridiculously well priced, rich, handsomely textured, charming wine of mannered complexity and style.

KWIK SAVE WHITE

Castillo Imperial Blanco NV, Somerfield 13.5 ~~£3.50~~
Hint of unfortunate sugar.

Muscatel de Valencia, Somerfield 16 ~~£3.50~~
Hint of marmalade, lashings of honey and hint of strawberry jam. What a bargain pud wine this is. And its screwcap ensures it stays fresh and frisky.

M&S WHITE

Moscatel de Valencia 1999 14.5 ~~£5.00~~
A delicious sweet pudding wine. Great with ice cream.

MAJESTIC WHITE

Albarino Martin Codax Rias Maixas 1999 13.5 ~~£5–7~~

Rueda Blanco, Vinos Sanz 1999 15 ~~£5.00~~
Very steely and crisp with an underlying fruitiness of gooseberry and pear.

Vionta Albarino 1999 13 ~~£7.10~~
Very pleasant and mildly amusing but eight quid?

MORRISONS WHITE

De Muller Chardonnay 1999 13 ~~£5.00~~
Oily, medicinal, very balsamic in texture and mighty peculiar as it finishes – like sour butter. A very creamy food wine.

Sanz Rueda Superior 1998 14 ~~£5.00~~
Something a little different from Chardonnay, has a hint of minerals to the ripe fruit.

Viña Albali Rosado Tempranillo 1999 13 ~~£3.50~~
Cherry-edged freshness.

ODDBINS WHITE

Burgans Albarino, Rias Baixas 1999 12.5 ~~£5–7~~

Chivite Gran Feudo Rosé, Navarra 1999 14 ~~£5.00~~
Brilliant food wine!

Marques de Caceres Rosé, Rioja 1999 13 ~~£5–7~~
Bit tart.

Torres Viña Esmeralda 1999 14 ~~£5–7~~
A charming aperitif. Full of interesting edges: peaches, pears, pineapples.

Viñas del Vero Chardonnay, Somontano 1999 15 ~~£5.00~~
A food Chardonnay in that it has a crisp, nutty, demurely fruity style to it.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Cruz de Piedra Garnacha Macabeo 1999 15 ~~£5.00~~
Individual, dry, vaguely gooseberryish and gently nutty. Makes a delicious change from Chardonnay.

El Velero Valdepeñas 1999 13.5 ~~£3.50~~
Gentle fruit, dry, with a faint musty tang.

Northern Block Macabeo, Lozano Estate, La Mancha 1999 15 £3.50
Has a delicious fat edge of melon and raspberry with a touch of butter.

Orange Grove 1999 12 £5.00

Viña Malea Viura 1999 12.5 £5.00
A bleak fish wine

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Dry White NV, Sainsbury's 14 £3.50
A party wine for New Labour: compromised, tight, very steely, suave, finishes with a sullen dryness. Most stores

Lagar de Cervera 1999 13 £7–10
Too pricey except for aficionados of the breed. Not at all stores.

Oaked Viura, Alteza 640 NV 15.5 £5.00
Deliciously up to standard, the new blend of this wine. Most stores.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Castillo Imperial Blanco NV, Somerfield 13.5 £3.50
Hint of unfortunate sugar.

Don Darias White NV 14 £5.00
Lemons, lemons, lemons - plus a hint of lime.

Muscatel de Valencia, Somerfield 16 £3.50
Hint of marmalade, lashings of honey and hint of strawberry jam. What a bargain pud wine this is. And its screw cap ensures it stays fresh and frisky.

Pergola Oaked Viura 1999, Somerfield 14 £5.00
A delicious thirst-quencher.

Viña Cana Rioja Blanco 1998, Somerfield 12.5 £5.00
Loses its grip towards the end of its act.

SPAR WHITE

Perfect for Parties White NV, Spar (1 litre) 10 £3.50
Dull. Not for any party I'd like to attend. Price band is the 75cl equivalent.

Valencia Dry White NV, Spar 13.5 £3.50
Fresh and fruity with an earthy undertone.

TESCO WHITE

Moscatel de Valencia, Tesco 16 £3.50
Quite superb! Has an overtone of orange marmalade to the honey and the raspberry and pear sweetness. Wonderful taint-free screwcap!

THRESHER WHITE

Albarino Condes de Alberei 1999 14.5 £5–7
You have to love the crisp individuality of this wine (Albarino is one of Europe's great individuals), to find six quid worth paying. Worth it? Just about.

Albarino Enexebre 1997 15.5 £7–10
A more compressed and complex version of the '99 wine – more texture

and teasing. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Campo Viejo Barrel Fermented Viura 1998 13 £5–7
Odd and vegetal. Needs a spicy fish stew to work.

Casa Rural White NV 15.5 –£3.50

Castillo de Liria Rosé NV 15 –£3.50
Cherry-ripe and flirtatious. Terrific charm to its fruit.

Conde de Valdemar Barrique Fermented Rioja 1996 16 £7–10
One of the sprauncier white Riojas I've tasted. The vanilla undertone is very attractive and controlled by rich fruit and balanced acids. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Conde de Valdemar Barrique Fermented Rioja 1998 12 £7–10
Very oaky and non-orgasmic. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Conde de Valdemar Rosado 1999 14 –£5.00
A terrific rosé to go with grilled fish.

Dominio di Montalvo White Rioja 1998 15.5 £5–7
Seriously elegant and subtly rich. Has real style to its fruit, which is gently chewy, and the finish has flourish and wit

Enexbre Albarino Condes de Albarei 1997 13 £5–7

Torres Viña Esmeralda 1999 14 £5–7
A charming aperitif. Full of interesting edges: peaches, pears, pineapples.

Torres Viña Sol 1999 14 –£5.00
Not as vivid as previous vintages the '99, but it will develop over the next year – if anyone keeps it that long.

UNWINS WHITE

Nekeas Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
Rich, creamy, immensely good news for gently spicy chicken dishes.

Viñas del Vero Chardonnay 1998 14 £5.00

Viñas del Vero Clarion, Somontano 1997 13 £7–10

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Albarino Condes de Alberei 1999 14.5 £5–7
You have to love the crisp individuality of this wine (Albarino is one of Europe's great individuals), to find six quid worth paying. Worth it? Just about.

Campo Viejo Barrel Fermented Viura 1998 13 £5–7
Odd and vegetal. Needs a spicy fish stew to work.

Casa Rural White NV 15.5 –£3.50

Castillo de Liria Rosé NV 15 –£3.50
Cheery-ripe and flirtatious. Terrific charm to its fruit.

Conde de Valdemar Rosado 1999 14 –£5.00
A terrific rosé to go with grilled fish.

Dominio di Montalvo White Rioja 1998 15.5 £5–7
Seriously elegant and subtly rich. Has real style to its fruit, which is gently chewy, and the finish has flourish and wit.

Moscatel de Valencia NV 16 —£5.00
The best value dessert wine in the world. Rich honey fruit with a flowing undertone of sweet orange marmalade

Torres Viña Esmeralda 1999 14 £5–7
A charming aperitif. Full of interesting edges: peaches, pears, pineapples

Torres Viña Sol 1999 14 —£5.00
Not as vivid as previous vintages the '99, but it will develop over the next year – if anyone keeps it that long.

WAITROSE WHITE

Albarino Pazo de Seoane, Rias Baixas 1999 15.5 £7–10
Unusual, complex (great double-change of gear on the finish) and very rewarding to sip and muse on.

Espiral Macabeo/ Chardonnay 1998 15.5 —£5.00

Lustau Moscatel de Chipiona NV 15 —£5.00
Honey and muted marmalade richness. A superb bargain pudding wine.

Viñas del Vero Chardonnay 1998 14 —£5.00

SWITZERLAND

The most marvellous thing about many Swiss wines is the absence of a cork seal. The sad thing is that there are very few Swiss wines on our major retailers' shelves. Could it be cost? Yes. Might it be the image of a country associated with cows, chocolate, cuckoo clocks and ski-slopes? Partly. Is it those screw caps? Undoubtedly. Swiss wine, however, is a secret worth investigating; native varieties, beautifully clean fruit, individual approach all from 36,000 acres of well-tended vines. I only wish I found more bottles in the UK to taste and rate. The wine I like best, when I find a rare bottle in the UK, is white and it's made from the Chasselas grape.

WINE CELLAR RED

Pinot Noir Trilogy 1996 12 £5–7

URUGUAY

Fascinating bijou ornamentation to the continent, growing the stupendous Tannat grape. This is the Costa Brava for Argentinians, but for us it can be the source of some richly individual and concentrated red wines. As well as the Basque-derived Tannat, there are fulsome Cabernets and Merlots. I expect to see an increasing demand among UK wine buyers for reds from here.

SAINSBURY'S RED

Bright Brothers Merlot/ Tannat 1998 14 £5.00

SOMERFIELD RED

Bright Brothers Tannat Cabernet Franc 2000 16 £5.00

Wow! It explodes with flavour and personality. Great food wine.

WAITROSE RED

Pisano Family Reserve Tannat 1998 14.5 £7–10

Lovely juicy richness with class-preserving tannins and acids.

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Bright Brothers Uruguayan Sauvignon/ Semillon 2000 15.5 £5.00

Loads of energy and flavour here. Excellent acids underpinning firm fruit

USA

What happened to Washington State's Cabernets? To Oregon's Pinot Noirs? Well, we still have California to keep our thirsts in check, and it is from this state that most of the interesting stuff emanates Ridge, the former dazzling producer in the mountains, isn't as fantastic as it was ten years ago maybe it's the Japanese owners – but Fetzer continues to make some magical organic wines, and there are also some cheapies, under-a-fiver wines, creeping in. Overall, California's Pinots and Chardonnays, from operations like Torres, are benchmarks of their kind

ASDA RED

Arius Zinfandel 1998 12 £5.00
Intensely fruity. Like a game sauce rather than a wine.

Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 (organic) 17 £7–10
Superbly California-style: warm, rich, pulsating, brilliant tannins, great ripe yet serious dry-sweet fruit. Absolutely marvellous stuff.

California Red 1999, Asda 14 £3.50
Even has a hint of the Californian lifestyle. Great little glugging wine.

California Syrah 1997, Asda 14.5 £5.00

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

BOOTHS RED

Redwood Trail Pinot Noir 1998 13 £5–7
Not as charmingly old hat as previous vintages

Stonybrook Merlot 1998 16 £5–7
Yes, it's soft and ripe, too ripe for old farts, but it's wonderfully jammy yet not OTT.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

BUDGENS RED

Glen Ellen Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 13 £5–7
Huge Sheer skyscraper juice.

Marc Xero Merlot NV 15 –£5.00
Most agreeable tannin which will help the blackcurrant fruit to go brilliantly with roast lamb.

Sutter Home Merlot 1998 13 –£5.00
Merlot? Really?

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

CWS RED

Blossom Hill Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 11 –£5.00

Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998 15.5 £5–7
Very elegant yet characterful. Resounds with flavoursome fruit, gently leathery and black cherryish. The finish is striking.

Fetzer Eagle Peak Merlot 1997 15 £5–7
Very expensive as it flattens out its leathery richness on the taste buds. Superstores only.

'Laid Back Ruby' California Ruby Cabernet 1999, Co-op 15 –£5.00
Bristles with food-friendly fruit. A bravura performance from dear old much-despised ruby Cabernet grapes.

Sebastiani Sonoma Cask Old Vine Zinfandel 1998 14.5 £7–10
Too expensive but with a Christmas turkey, with that fruity stuffing and that rich gravy, this extravagantly fruity specimen would be a rare but fitting companion. Superstores only.

KWIK SAVE RED

E & J Gallo Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 13 –£5.00

E & J Gallo Ruby Cabernet 1997 14 –£5.00

M&S RED

Clear Lake Cabernet Franc 1999 15 –£5.00
If you can get over the reek of sulphur you reach some interesting fruit of cherry-rich charms.

Freedom Ridge Shiraz 1999 15 £5–7
Very juicy, almost smoked jammy in its ripeness. Needs food.

Live Oak Road Zinfandel 1999 15 £7–10
Hugely generous, relaxed warmth here. The texture is like tufted carpet – you sink up to your ears in it.

Zamora Zinfandel 1998 14 £5–7
For lovers of baked fruit tarts only. It's an extremely self-consciously rich and ripe wine.

MAJESTIC RED

Beringer Appellation Zinfandel 1996 14 £7–10

Beringer Valdeguie 1998 15 £5–7
Astonishingly elegant and untypically European in style. It's dry, mild, blackcurranty yet not sweet, and it has casual confidence on the finish.

Firestone Old Vine Cucmunga Zinfandel 1997 17 £7–10
Wonderful unfiltered, natural wine of substance and spiciness. Gorgeous tannins sweep the taste buds in a tide of buttressed flavour of plums/ cherries and blackberries.

Foxen Pinot Noir Santa Maria 1997 14 £13–20
Typical Californian sweetness and almost elegance. Good Pinot perfume.

Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1996 15.5 £5–7

Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1997 15 £5–7
Hugely juicy but saved from a fate worse than death (OTTness) by its alert tannins

Ironstone Vineyards Merlot 1997 16 £5–7
Very jammy and textured but has lovely tannins which make for a balanced mouthful of ripeness, not too dry or over fruity, and a lingering finish.

Kautz-Ironstone Shiraz 1997 16 £5–7
A very vibrant personality of meaty depth and resounding richness. Not typically California or Shiraz but that's its charm. It has character, control and calmness

Prosperity Red NV 16 ~£5.00
The label is worth the price of admission and what you get is dry, savoury fruit of pizzazz and purpose. Huge serious fun quaffing.

MORRISONS RED

Blossom Hill California Red NV 10 ~£5.00

Californian Red NV 10 ~£3.50

Fetzer Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 14 £7–10
Getting very dry as it matures and begins to lose its composure. Needs a casserole to spark it into life.

Glen Ellen Pinot Noir 1997 9 £5–7
Ugh!

Glen Ellen Proprietor's Reserve Zinfandel 1997 12 ~£5.00

Glen Ellen Zinfandel 1997 11 £5–7
Very candy-like in its richness.

Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1997 15 £5–7
Hugely juicy but saved from a fate worse than death (OTTness) by its alert tannins.

Ironstone Vineyards Shiraz 1998 14.5 ~£5.00
Vigorous attack of spicy plums and berries, very smooth texture and a deep finish.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

ODDBINS RED

Bonterra Zinfandel, Mendocino 1996 16.5 £7–10

A wonderfully exotic specimen of warmth and immediacy. Spicy, chewy, softly tannic, hedgerow fruited, it has immense charm and forwardness.

Canyon Road Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5–7

Canyon Road Merlot, Geyserville 1997 13.5 £5–7

Clos LaChance Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Cruz Mountains 1997 13 £13–20
Lot of money, lot of juice.

Clos LaChance Zinfandel, El Dorado County 1997 16.5 £10–13
Ripe, jammy, savoury, tannic – huge credentials for a formidably rich and engaging Zin. Has a lovely layer of subtle spice.

Fetzer Syrah 1997 14 £7–10
Very juicy and ripe.

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5–7
Sunny, warmly engaging fruit, little tannin to give it grip but the lushness of the fruit is spot on. A modern, pacy wine of controlled charms

Fetzer Vineyards Home Ranch Zinfandel 1996 15.5 £5–7

Fetzer Vineyards Select Zinfandel 1997 16.5 £7–10
Jammy, spicy, very ripe but awesomely delicious

Ravenswood Vintners Blend Zinfandel 1997 15 £7–10
Juicy and rich. Lovely spicy food wine.

Ravenswood Zinfandel, Napa Valley 1997 16 £10–13
The tannins! The tannins! The tannins! Quite yummy.

Ravenswood Zinfandel, Sonoma County 1997 14 £10–13
Touch too juicy to sip over a long afternoon. Needs chicken tikka

Sterling Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley 1996 15 £7–10
Ripe and raisiny, very ready to drink. Tannins beginning to absorb the glucose and turn super dry.

SAFEWAY RED

Echelon Merlot 1998 15 £7–10
Tastes barbecues, so rich and burned-crusty is it.

Fetzer Bonterra Zinfandel 1997 (organic) 16.5 £7–10
The acme of rip-roaring fruit: sunny ripe, soft, urgent-to-please, individual, pure, natural and massively quaffable. A superb modern mouthful. 70 stores.

Pacific Coast Ruby Cabernet 1998 15 –£5.00
California in a bottle! Like a genie, the fruit escapes very happily. Selected stores.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

SAINSBURY'S RED

Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 (organic) 17 £7–10
Superbly California-style: warm, rich, pulsating, brilliant tannins, great ripe

yet serious dry-sweet fruit. Absolutely marvellous stuff. Not at all stores

Bonterra Zinfandel 1997 16 £7–10
(organic)
Buzzes with rich, deep, subtly spicy fruit. Selected stores.

Coastal Pinot Noir, Robert Mondavi 1996 16 £7–10
To be preferred to a hundred Volnays Superb texture, with raspberry and truffle fruit, hint of plum jam, great tannins and big, beetle-browed length of finish. Selected stores.

Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998 15.5 £5–7
Very elegant yet characterful. Resounds with flavoursome fruit, gently leathery and black cherryish. The finish is striking.

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5–7
Sunny, warmly engaging fruit, little tannin to give it grip but the lushness of the fruit is spot on. A modern, pacy wine of controlled charms.

Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 10 £5–7
Like a baked fruit tart. Make a good gravy base.

Mondavi Coastal Merlot 1997 16 £7–10
Not a typical Merlot – it's not leathery or biting at first sip – but it is hugely civilised and with some pretensions to class. The texture is plummy, polished and poised. Exceedingly quaffable. Not at all stores

Stonybrook Vineyard Merlot 1998 16 £5–7
Yes, it's soft and ripe, too ripe for old farts, but it's wonderfully jammy yet not OTT. Selected stores

Sutter Home Merlot 1998 13 £5.00
So juicy you can drink it through a straw – though there are some tannins which might clog it up. Most stores.

Sutter Home Pinot Noir 1997 13 £5–7
Has some real Pinot charm but not enough to rate higher. Selected stores.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

SOMERFIELD RED

Californian Dry Red NV, Somerfield 14 £5.00
Juicy and super-ripe. A curry wine.

Laguna Canyon Zinfandel 1998 12 £5.00
Very cosmetic aroma, exceedingly juicy fruit.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

SPAR RED

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5–7

Sunny, warmly engaging fruit, little tannin to give it grip but the lushness of the fruit is spot on. A modern, pacy wine of controlled charms.

TESCO RED

California Old Vine Estate Carignane 1996 13.5 £5–7

Colombia Crest Cote de Colombia Grenache 1997 15 £5.00
Terrific performer with TV dinners: sweet, saucy, commercial, a good laugh.

Edgewood Estate Napa Valley Malbec 1997 16 £10–13
Extremely cool and collected in style by virtue of its smoothness of delivery and highly evolved, soft tannins. It is expensive but it is rewardingly rich and elegant and in a perfect state of healthy drinkability.

Ehlers Grove Syrah 1998 13 £7–10
Selected stores.

Mondavi Coastal Merlot 1997 16 £7–10
Not a typical Merlot – it's not leathery or biting at first sip – but it is hugely civilised and with some pretensions to class. The texture is plummy, polished and poised. Exceedingly quaffable. Not at all stores

Robert Mondavi Coastal Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 14 £7–10

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

West Coast Ruby Cabernet/Merlot 1999, Tesco 15 £5.00
Strikingly rich, herby, and with subtle yet characterful tannins.

THRESHER RED

Clos du Bois Merlot 1996 14.5 £13–20
Not necessarily classic Merlot but the clash here between the sweet fruit and the ripe tannins is highly drinkable and well meaning. A curiously delicate Merlot of some finesse, it is expensive but it is delicious. Only at Wine Rack and Bottoms Up.

E & J Gallo Ruby Cabernet 1999 14 £5.00
Joyously plump and ripe with enough tannins to keep it from going OTT. Great with pasta dishes.

Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998 15.5 £5–7
Very elegant yet characterful. Resounds with flavoursome fruit, gently leathery and black cherryish. The finish is striking

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5–7
Sunny, warmly engaging fruit, little tannin to give it grip but the lushness of the fruit is spot on. A modern, pacy wine of controlled charms

Redwood Trail Pinot Noir 1997 13.5 £5–7
Getting long in the tooth, fruitwise, and the taste buds feel the reluctance of the wine to move with any energy.

Robert Mondavi North Coast Cellars Zinfandel 1995 15 £7–10

Talus Zinfandel 1997 13 £5–7
Juicy with a savoury finish.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

Vendange Californian Red 1998 14 £5.00
Party wine! This party, at least, feels it needs lots of company. Only at Thresher Wine Stores.

Woodbridge Mondavi Zinfandel 1996 14 £5–7

UNWINS RED

Beaulieu Vineyard Coastal Pinot Noir 1998 14 £5–7
Nice nose tickle on the Pinot aroma (wild raspberry) and cherryish thereafter

Blossom Hill NV 10 £5.00

De Loach Zinfandel Platinum 1996 10 £7–10
Too old and treacly. Was good and tannic two years ago. Wines age fast in California. Good for marinating dead meat but not live tongues.

Delicato Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 14 £5–7
Deliciously rich and gently savoury with polished tannins

Delicato Zinfandel 1998 13 £5–7
Very juicy and simpering.

Fetzer Private Collection Cabernet Sauvignon 1994 15 £13–20
Highly drinkable. At its peak and it won't keep.

Fetzer Syrah 1997 14 £5–7
Very juicy for Fetzer. Possibly ageing too fast.

Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1997 15 £5–7
Hugely juicy but saved from a fate worse than death (OT'Tness) by its alert tannins

King Estate Pinot Noir 1995 12 £13–20
Absurd price for a vaguely absurd Pinot

R H Phillips Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15 £5–7
Handsome sweet fruit with excellent tannic backbone.

Saintsbury Garnet Carneros Pinot Noir 1998 13.5 £10–13
Bitter cherries at Fortnum & Mason prices.

Schug Pinot Noir 1996 11 £10–13
Starts well and alertly but descends into farce.

Seven Peaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 16.5 £7–10
Outstanding chocolate, coffee and cassis-edged fruit. A perfectly mature specimen with lovely tannins

Stonehedge Merlot 1998 15 £5–7
Has a sweet figgy finish but it's got a dry underbelly of herbs and a very thick texture – so it coagulates pleasantly in the throat.

Thornhill Pinot Noir 1996 12 £5.00
Extremely juicy and curry friendly.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7

Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

Wente Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 16 £7–10
Catch it and drink it before Christmas – it'll age fast and its lovely tannins will loosen quickly.

Wente Charles Wetmore Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 12.5 £10–13
Or rather, 12.5 to 15 points. Just beginning to turn juicy. The aroma is breaking up. The variation in rating refers to the variation in the bottle.

Wente Crane Ridge Reserve Merlot 1997 13.5 £10–13
Juicy fruit, warm tannins.

Wente Reliz Creek Reserve Pinot Noir 1996 14 £10–13
Soft and ripe and expensive.

Wente Zinfandel 1998 11 £5–7
So fruit juicy.

VICTORIA WINE RED

Blossom Hill Californian Red NV 10 £5.00

E & J Gallo Ruby Cabernet 1999 14 £5.00
Joyously plump and ripe with enough tannins to keep it from going OTT. Great with pasta dishes.

Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998 15.5 £5–7
Very elegant yet characterful. Resounds with flavoursome fruit, gently leathery and black cherryish. The finish is striking.

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5–7
Sunny, warmly engaging fruit, little tannin to give it grip but the lushness of the fruit is spot on. A modern, pacy wine of controlled charms.

Redwood Trail Pinot Noir 1997 13.5 £5–7
Getting long in the tooth, fruitwise, and the taste buds feel the reluctance of the wine to move with any energy.

Talus Zinfandel 1996 13.5 £5–7

Talus Zinfandel 1997 13 £5–7
Juicy with a savoury finish.

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 12 £5–7
Very juicy and sloppy. Not good for the brain.

Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996 12.5 £5–7
Very overpriced and, sadly, over here.

Vendange Californian Red 1998 14 £5.00
Party wine! This party, at least, feels it needs lots of company.

Woodbridge Mondavi Zinfandel 1996 14 £5–7

WAITROSE RED

Bonterra Vineyards Merlot 1997 (organic) 16.5 £7–10
Great class and polish here, with outstanding tannins and acids to balance so brilliantly the lashings of sweet fruit. It finishes dryly and decisively.

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 15.5 £5–7
Sunny, warmly engaging fruit, little tannin to give it grip but the lushness of the fruit is spot on. A modern, pacy wine of controlled charms.

Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 15 £20+
The ripeness subsumes the tannins. Only from Waitrose Direct

Stags Leap Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 16 £20+
Lot of money, but a mountain of moody fruit. Only from Waitrose Direct

Stonebridge Cellars Zinfandel 1997 13 £5–7
Very jammy and creamy finishing.

Yorkville Cellars Cabernet Franc 1997 (organic) 14 £7–10
Juicy yet dry.

Yorkville Petit Verdot 1997 16 £7–10
Much more like it, Yorkville! Brilliantly bustling tannins to lovely purple damson fruit. Spicy, deep, warm.

WINE CELLAR RED

Clos du Val Le Clos NV 14 £7–10

Fetzer Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara 1996 13 £5–7

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1996 16.5 £5–7
Warm, all-embracing, deep, broad, and most charmingly well-textured and ripe on the finish.

Gallo Sonoma Barrelli Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1994 15.5 £10–13

Gallo Sonoma County Pinot Noir 1995 13.5 £7–10

Gallo Sonoma Frei Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon 1994 14 £10–13

Mondavi Coastal Merlot 1997 16 £7–10
Not a typical Merlot – it's not leathery or biting at first sip – but it is hugely civilised and with some pretensions to class. The texture is plummy, polished and poised. Exceedingly quaffable. Not at all stores.

ASDA WHITE

Arius Californian Chenin Blanc 1998, Asda 13 £5.00
Odd, very odd. But with Thai food, it would be fine.

Bonterra Chardonnay 1998 (organic) 15.5 £7.10
Very rich and aromatic. Not OTT, but close, but with oriental food it would be a winner.

Californian White 1999, Asda 13.5 £3.50
Amazing price for a Hollywood style wine.

BOOTHS WHITE

Stonybrook Chardonnay 1998 16 £5.00
Lovely plump ripe fruit which does not turn blowsy. Gorgeous demure melonosity here.

BUDGENS WHITE

Glen Ellen Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
Lovely throbbing melon fruit. A real throat charmer as a welcome home-from-the-coalface pick-me-up.

CWS WHITE

Garnet Point Chardonnay-Chenin 1997 15.5 £5.00

'The Big Chill' California Colombard Chardonnay 1999, Co-op 13.5 £5.00
A minor chill in fact.

KWIK SAVE WHITE

E & J Gallo Chardonnay 1997 10 £5.00

M&S WHITE

Clear Lake Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5.00
Goes a bit gooey lemon and sentimental on the finish.

Clear Lake Rosé 1999 13 £5.00
Very sweet and cloying

Dunnigan Lane Fume Blanc 1999 13.5 £5–7

Gardeners Grove Chardonnay 1999 13.5 £5–7

MAJESTIC WHITE

Beringer Californian Sauvignon Blanc 1997 13.5 £5–7

Beringer Californian Zinfandel Blush 1998 6 £5–7
Repulsive mush. It is a sin to turn Zin into fruit juice.

Beringer Napa Valley Fume Blanc 1998 15 £7–10
Very woody beginning and a very smoothly sandpapered finish. A superb wine for complex fish dishes and poultry dishes with cream sauces.

Essencia Orange Muscat 1996 (half-bottle) 16 £5–7
Gorgeously rich and sweet and takes no prisoners – however boisterously rich the pud.

Fetzer Barrel Select Chardonnay 1997 15 £7.10
Very tropical and ripe.

Fetzer Viognier 1999 15 £7–10
Delicious! And what an apricot-scented change from melony Chardonnay.

Foxen Bien Nacido Vineyard Chardonnay 1996 14 £13–20
More lemon to leaven the balsam here and very drinkable but absurdly priced for a medium-complex wine. It has good woody notes.

Foxen Tinaquaic Vineyard Chardonnay 1996 13.5 £13–20
Very thick and rich – like balsam – but goes with food (which it needs). The price is outrageous. Rather overbearing.

Ironstone Chardonnay 1998 10 £5–7
Hugely fruity and woody. Too OTT for this drinker

Ironstone Semillon Chardonnay 1998 15 £5–7
Has delicacy with power in a way

typical of whites from the sublime vineyards of Western Australia. It combines under-ripe melons and a thrusting nuttiness. Dry and hugely food-friendly.

Kautz-Ironstone Chardonnay 1998 13.5 £5–7
A very muddled Chardonnay which has to be drunk with food to be effective. It is ripe, very full, very loquacious and has no counterpoint to its fruity fulsomeness.

Prosperity White NV 15 £5.00

MORRISONS WHITE

Californian White NV 12 £3.50

Ironstone Chardonnay 1997 13.5 £5–7

Ironstone Chardonnay 1998 10 £5–7
Hugely fruity and woody. Too OTT for this drinker.

Ironstone Obsession 1998 10 £5.00
Extremely puerile and off-sweet

Wente Johannesburg Riesling 1997 16.5 £5.00
Terrific spice and lime sherbet fruit here. Not wholly dry, to be sure, but it bounces with life and would be terrific with Thai food

ODDBINS WHITE

Canyon Road Chardonnay 1998 14 £5–7

Clos LaChance Chardonnay, Santa Cruz Mountains 1997 13.5 £13–20
Very expensive and almost delicious but the elements are so loosely knit I query its impact and value. It does not carry through the promise of its bouquet.

Fetzer Bonterra Muscat 1999 (half-bottle) 15 £5–7
Delicious sweet aperitif.

Fetzer Vineyards Bonterra Viognier 1998 16 £7–10
One of the most sophisticated Viogniers around. Lovely sophisticated fruit.

Fetzer Viognier 1999 15 £7–10
Delicious! And what an apricot scented change from melony Chardonnay.

Landmark Overlook Chardonnay 1998 17 £13–20
Like a Meursault, no Montrachet, in a magic vintage. Brilliant wood and fruit marriage. Polished seduction.

Mariquita White 1996 14 £5.00
Very sweet and full but a must-have wine for Indian and rich Thai/Chinese dishes. Fine Wine Stores only.

SAFEWAY WHITE

Bonterra Muscat 1997 (half-bottle) 15.5 £5–7
A delicious half sweet aperitif which tastes of grapes. Yes! Grapes! Not plums or grass or strawberries or orchards, but rich muscat grapes. Isn't that what we pay our money for?

Fetzer Unoaked Chardonnay 1998 16 £5–7
A finely wrought but not overwrought specimen: gentle, understated yet warm and Californian. It's relaxed,

soft, supple and hugely drinkable. Has a lovely chewiness on the finish.

Ironstone Chardonnay 1998 10 £5–7
Hugely fruity and woody. Too OTT for this drinker

Pacific Coast Chardonnay 1999 15.5 —£5.00
Delicious! Hints of smoke, lime, strawberry and melon.

Pyramid Lake Napa Gamay Rosé NV 8 —£5.00
Revoltingly cosmetic and 'manufactured'. An insult to the grape.

Sutter Home Unoaked Chardonnay 1998 13.5 —£5.00
Very sticky so it will adhere to a spicy fish stew.

SAINSBURY'S WHITE

Bonterra Chardonnay 1998 (organic) 15.5 £7–10
So elegant it walks on tiptoe where other Chardonnays stride. If this minimalist deliciousness is your style, wear it. Even at £8.50. Not at all stores.

Bonterra Muscat (half-bottle) (organic) 15.5 £5–7
A delicious half-sweet aperitif which tastes of grapes. Yes! Grapes! Not plums or grass or strawberries or orchards, but rich muscat grapes. Isn't that what we pay our money for? Selected stores.

Coastal Chardonnay, Robert Mondavi 1997 17 £7–10
Beautiful biscuity texture, subtle vegetal fruit, and very elegant on the finish. 60 stores.

Fetzer Barrel Select Chardonnay 1997 15 £7–10
Very tropical and ripe.

Gallo Colombard NV 11 —£5.00

Stonybrook Vineyards Chardonnay 1997 16 —£5.00
Staggeringly good value here. Loads of richness and flavour without being remotely overbaked or clumsy. Selected stores

SOMERFIELD WHITE

Talus Chardonnay 1998 16.5 £5–7
Superb value fruit for you get authentic California all-surfin' fruit and sunshine. Deep and delicious.

TESCO WHITE

Fetzer Barrel Select Chardonnay 1997 15 £7–10
Very tropical and ripe.

Fetzer Viognier 1999 15 £7–10
Delicious! And what an apricot-scented change from melony Chardonnay.

Hogue Chenin Blanc 1998 11 £5–7
Flouncy and frivolous (not a six quid wine). Most stores.

West Coast California Chardonnay 1999, Tesco 14.5 —£5.00
Some good rich touches to the urgent and unguent fruit which stays the civilised side of gushing

THRESHER WHITE

Columbia Crest Chardonnay 1997 15.5 £5–7

Dunnewood Chardonnay 1998 16 £7–10
Delightfully uncluttered yet richly endowed, balanced, bonny Chardonnay.

Fetzer Barrel Select Viognier 1997 17 £7–10
More attractively fruity yet subtle (apricots and warm wood) than many a forty-quid Condrieu – the bijou French vineyard area which first planted the Viognier grape. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Fetzer Sundial Chardonnay, 1998 16 £5–7
Always as full of sun as the face of a California beachbum, this is fruit modelled on richness, warmth, and the flavours of the tropics. This vintage has a lovely freshness to it.

Fetzer Syrah Rosé 1999 13 £5–7
Very clammy and humid. Needs mackerels from the barbecue to leaven its richness

Fetzer Viognier 1999 15 £7–10
Delicious! And what an apricot-scented change from melony Chardonnay.

Jekel Chardonnay, Gravelstone Vineyards 1996 15.5 £7–10
Meaty and ripe. Great with robust fish dishes. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up stores only.

St Supery Sauvignon Blanc 1997 15.5 £7–10
Very unusual and possibly repellent (to an old world wine soak). But the sheer fluidity of the rich fruit, textured and softly sticky, is remarkable. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Vendange Californian Dry White 1998 11 £5.00
Struggles to make an impact. Like a one-legged centre-forward. Not at Wine Rack.

Vendanges White Zinfandel 1998 9 £5.00
Utterly revolting confection: sweet, rosy, clotted, jejune. Thresher Wine Shops only.

Wente Riva Ranch Chardonnay 1996 16 £7–10
Big and a touch blistering in its richness and spicy pear and pastry fruitiness but I love its quirkiness and food compatibility. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Woodbridge Californian Sauvignon Blanc, Robert Mondavi 1996 13 £5–7
Odd sticky texture. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

UNWINS WHITE

Blossom Hill NV 10 £5.00

Bonterra Viognier 1998 (organic) 15 £7–10
Chewy apricots.

Byron Chardonnay, Santa Barbara 1996 13.5 £13–20
Far too much to ask for the limitations of the fruit

Coastal Chardonnay, Robert Mondavi 1997 17 £10–13
Beautiful biscuity texture, subtle vegetal fruit, and very elegant on the finish.

Fetzer Sundial Chardonnay 1997 16 £5–7

One of the best Californian Chardonnays around for the money.

Redwood Trail Chardonnay 1998 15.5 £5–7
Delicious sticky fruit. Gums up the molars something marvellous.

Seven Oaks Reserve Chardonnay 1997 14.5 £10–13
Very expressive and exceptionally creamy fruit

Seven Peaks Chardonnay 1997 15 £7–10
Pricey but plump and ripe with promise.

Sutter Home Chardonnay 1997 14 £5.00

Sutter Home White Zinfandel 1998 8 £5.00
An abomination. Zinfandel is a red wine not a sweet pink gunge. An act of criminality.

Wente Chardonnay 1998 14 £5–7
Chewy, very chewy.

Wente Riva Ranch Reserve Chardonnay 1996 14 £7–10
Expensive though elegant and expressive.

Wente Sauvignon Blanc 1998 13 £5.7
Lacks freshness and zip.

Wente White Zinfandel 1998 10 £5–7
Too sweet

VICTORIA WINE WHITE

Columbia Crest Chardonnay 1997 15.5 £5–7

Fetzer Sundial Chardonnay, 1998 16 £5–7
Always as full of sun as the face of a California beachbum, this is fruit modelled on richness, warmth, and the flavours of the tropics. This vintage has a lovely freshness to it. Selected stores.

Fetzer Syrah Rosé 1999 13 £5–7
Very clammy and humid. Needs mackerels from the barbecue to leaven its richness.

Vendange Californian Dry White 1998 11 £5.00
Struggles to make an impact. Like a one-legged centre forward. Not at Wine Rack.

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Wente Riva Ranch Chardonnay 1996 16 £7–10
Big and a touch blistering in its richness and spicy pear and pastry fruitiness but I love its quirkiness and food compatibility.

WAITROSE WHITE

Acacia Chardonnay 1995 14.5 £10–13
Thundering richness and leafy depth. Only from Waitrose Direct.

Fetzer Unoaked Chardonnay 1999 14.5 £5–7
Nutty richness and warm throughout of fruit. Not elegant but good with food.

Fetzer Viognier 1999 15 £7.10
Delicious! And what an apricot-

scented change from melony Chardonnay.

WINE CELLAR WHITE

Gallo Sonoma County Chardonnay 1995 10 £7–10

Quady Essensia Orange Muscat, California 1996 (half-bottle) 16 £5–7

Excellent keeping qualities with its waxy, candied orange peel fruit and rich acidity – say ten years or so – but great now with fresh fruit – or a crème brûlée.

Quady Starboard Batch 88, California (half-bottle) 15 £5.00

PART 2

FORTIFIED AND SPARKLING WINES

FORTIFIED WINES

ASDA

Fine Ruby Port, Asda 14 £5–7

Manzanilla, Asda 17 £5–7
A staggeringly well-endowed, aromatic, yet subtle sherry of immense charm and richness. Unusually well textured and soft (uniquely so, I suggest) and so warm and approachable it must convert those who previously found the tealeaf and hard edge of this style of wine too austere.

Tawny Port, Asda 15 £5–7

BOOTHS

Amontillado del Puerto, Lustau 16 £7–10
Sure, it smells mouldy and too ripe for comfort but imagine a glass, well chilled, with a bowl of almonds and an absorbing book. Great combination.

Banyuls Chapoutier 1996 (50cl) 16 £7–10
A red wine of wonderful sweet richness. It's like liquid Christmas cake

Churchills Dry White Port 13 £7–10
Labelled like an invitation to a memorial service, this is rich and sticky and fine in the Douro, ice-cold, in 140-degree heat and with comedic companions. In other circumstances it may fail to ignite your soul.

Finest Reserve Port, Booths 14.5 £7–10
Very sweet and simpering and again fruit cakes get top billing.

Fino, Booths 14 £5.00

Henriques & Henriques 5 year Old Madeira 15 £10–13

Lustau Old East India Sherry 17 £7–10
Magnificent name, recalling the excesses of empire, just as the intense sweet fruit (molasses and butterscotch with crème brûlée overtones) is redolent of excess around Victorian dinner tables. A taste of history. Quite marvellous stuff.

Manzanilla Sherry, Booths 15 £5.00
Classic tealeaf and saline edged, bone-dry fruit – or rather, not fruit so much as decayed vegetable matter.

Medium Amontillado NV, Booths 15.5 £5.00
Delicious rich crème brûlée-edged rich fruit which is never sweet. A marvellous winter warmer.

Niepoort LBV 1994 13 £10–13
Sweet, and you can taste the alcohol.

Niepoort Ruby Port 14 £7–10
Sweet and rich and great with fruit cakes (Uncle Eustace, for example).

Taylors Quinta de Vargellas Port 1986 15.5 £13–20

M&S

Pale Dry Fino Sherry 16 £5.00
One of the best finos around, blended specifically to M&S's instructions, in which the bone-dry salinity of classic fino has a background echo of gentle fruit so the result is a lingering pleasure, still very dry, of residual richness. A fino of exceptional style – and still a great wine for grilled prawns.

Vintage Character Port 15 £5–7

MAJESTIC

Amontillado Seco Napoleon, Hidalgo 16 £7–10
Pour it over ice cream or simply use a spoon to lap it up. It's molasses-rich but not sweet. Wonderful treat for the in-laws.

Pedro Ximénez Viejo Napoleon, Hidalgo 15 £7–10

Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita 1986 17 £13–20
Like taking a draught of liquidised hedgerow plus sun, an allotment of herbs and even a hint of very soft, beautifully developed tannins. The texture is balsamic and gripping, the effect is heady, the residual memory is of doing something rather naughty.

ODDBINS

Bodegas Don Tomas 'Zingara' Manzanilla, Sanlúcar Du Barrameda NV (half-bottle) 16 £5.00
An acquired taste, this bone-dry, tealeaf-flavoured, saline-tangy aperitif. Please acquire it. It will be difficult. The way will be fraught. But one day you will be able to say I am, my children, a real Manzanilla lover.

Classic Fino, Valdespino NV 16 £7–10
Intense fruit of such dryness it puckers the molars. Remarkable austerity in a world of so much sweet fruit. Terrific with grilled prawns.

Classic Manzanilla, Valdespino NV 16 £5–7
Dry as above, tealeaf-edged, beautiful. One of the planet's great pre-prandial tipples

SAFEWAY

Amontillado, Safeway 13 £5.00

Blandy's Duke of Clarence Rich Madeira 16 £7–10
Wonderful old fashioned plot: Dickensian, warm, sweet, sentimental. Drink it with Christmas cake. At most stores.

Fino, Safeway 14 £5.00

González Byass Tio Pepe Fino Muy Sec NV 15 £7–10
Very dry and old uncle-y.

Marsala Superiore, Garibalde Dolce NV (18% vol) 16 £5–7
Staggeringly rich and figgy. Wonderful

for desserts of all descriptions (even if they all come served at once on the same grand plate). Or pour it over ice cream.

Vintage Character Port, Safeway	13	£5–7
Warre's Warrior Finest Reserve Port NV	13	£7–10

SAINSBURY'S

Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira	15.5	£7–10
González Byass Matusalem NV (half-bottle)	17.5	£10–13

Wonderful! One of the world's great dessert wines. The texture and the colour of engine oil, it has a butterscotch and crème brûlée sweetness and a complex smoky honeyed edge. Selected stores

Medium Dry Montilla, Sainsbury's	13.5	£3.50
Pale Cream Montilla, Sainsbury's	14	£3.50
Pale Cream Sherry, Sainsbury's	15.5	£5.00
Pale Dry Amontillado, Sainsbury's	15	£5.00
Pale Dry Fino Sherry, Sainsbury's	15	£5–7
Pale Dry Manzanilla, Sainsbury's	15	£5.00
Pale Dry Montilla, Sainsbury's	14	£3.50
Ruby Port, Sainsbury's	15	£5–7
Sainsbury's LBV Port 1992	15.5	£7–10
Tawny Port, Sainsbury's	13.5	£5–7
Ten Year Old Tawny Port, Sainsbury's	15	£7–10

SOMERFIELD

Amontillado Sherry, Somerfield	17.5	£5.00

Quite magnificent richness and honeyed dryness with a sweet edge which is unusually rich yet not ripe. A lovely wine of great class.

Cream Sherry, Somerfield	16	£5.00

A bargain wine for chocolate biscuit lovers. The biscuits and the wine is a marriage made not on this earth.

Fino Sherry, Somerfield	16	£5.00

Remarkable lilt on the finish which stops the wine being characterised as austere. A remarkably toothsome experience.

Manzanilla Sherry, Somerfield	16	£5.00

Superb nutty Earl Grey (subtle) tealeaf edge. A wonderful aperitif wine of great distinction.

SPAR

Old Cellar LBV Port 1996, Spar	14	£7–10

Very rich and ripe and puzzling to match with food. Fruit cake? Stilton? Doesn't have the crustiness of fine vintage port but it's forward enough to raise the spirits.

Old Cellar Ruby Port NV, Spar	14.5	£5–7

Rich, sweet and generous – just like

the perfect maiden aunt. A perfect fireside cockle-warmer.

TESCO

10 Year Old Tawny Port, Tesco 13.5 £10–13

Finest Madeira, Tesco 15.5 £7–10

Mick Morris Rutherglen Liqueur Muscat (half-bottle) 17 £5.00

A miraculously richly textured pud wine of axle-grease texture and creamy figginess. Huge, world class.

Superior Oloroso Seco, Tesco 16 £3.50

Contemplating that lush amber hue, like the eyes of a rare snake, the promise of great things is evident and so it proves. It is dry yet it has burned butter, molasses (dry), and a wonderful spread of flavours as it stretches itself over the palate. A quite superb drink, well chilled, by itself, as an aperitif with nuts etc, and, supremely, as a bottle to read by. An Anita Brookner hero would drink this wine and smile at life.

Superior Palo Cortado, Tesco 16 £5.00

For a pound more you get more life to the bouquet and a rich, plumper texture than Tesco's Superior Oloroso . . . but the wine has many similar features The Palo, perhaps, is more elegant and individual.

UNWINS

Calem 10 Year Old Port 11 £13–20

Calem Colheita Tawny Port 1987 10 £20+

Not good value. Many other tawnies are more vigorous at half the price.

Calem Late Bottled Vintage Port 1994 14 £7–10

Sweet yet biscuity. Rich yet layered and not obvious. Ripe yet capable of subtle surprises.

Calem Quinta da Foz Port 1987 13 £13–20

Calem Vintage Port 1983 10 £20+

Load of rubbish for fifty quid. Defies belief that anyone could see any complexity in this straightforwardly rich, sweet wine. The LBV from the same lodge is loads better.

Cockburns 1991 13 £20+

Croft 1991 13 £20+

Dos Cortados Dry Old Oloroso Sherry 14 £7–10

Henriques & Henriques Aged 10 Years Malmsey Madeira 16 £13–20

To sip while watching an OTT Bond movie over Christmas week. It's not very sweet but it is fruitcake vinified. Utterly delicious and heart-stopping.

Henriques & Henriques Aged 5 Years Finest Medium Dry Madeira 15 £10–13

Wonderful Christmas aperitif: rich, not sweet but hugely fruity, curranty, ripe, thick and hedonistic.

Lustau Old East India Sherry 17 £7–10

Magnificent name, recalling the excesses of empire, just as the intense sweet fruit (molasses and butterscotch with crème brûlée overtones) is

redolent of excess around Victorian dinner tables. A taste of history. Quite marvellous stuff.

Matusalem Sweet Old Oloroso Sherry 14.5 £7–10

Quinta do Noval 1991 15 £20+

Warres 1991 16 £20+
The best of the '91s. Hugely delicious figgy richness and grip.

VICTORIA WINE

Dows LBV 1992 13.5 £10–13

Quinta de Vargellas Vintage Port 1986 15 £13–20

Taylors Quinta de Terra Feita 1986 17 £13–20
Like taking a draught of liquidised hedgerow plus sun, an allotment of herbs and even a hint of very soft, beautifully developed tannins. The texture is balsamic and gripping, the effect is heady, the residual memory is of doing something rather naughty.

WAITROSE

10 Year Old Tawny Port, Waitrose 14 £10–13
Very rich and sympathetic (to a slice of Christmas cake).

Apostoles Palo Cortado Muy Viejo (half-bottle) 18.5 £10–13
The ultimate bookworm's, lone hedonist treat. a wine of huge treacly texture (but not sweetness), baked apple and cobnut crumble-edged fruit with touches of liquorice, and a stunningly gripping finish.

Apostoles Palo Cortado Oloroso (half-bottle) 13.5 £7–10

Comte de Lafont Pineau des Charentes 15 £5–7

Dry Fly Amontillado 12 £5–7

Fino Sherry, Waitrose 15.5 £5.00
Bone-dry, saline, demanding, clean –has a lovely lingering marzipan echo.

Fonseca Traditional LBV 1983 15 £13–20

Matusalem Oloroso Dulce Muy Viejo (half-bottle) 16.5 £10–13
Brilliant wine to clog the throats of carol singers. Has a rich toffeed undertone of burned treacle

Oloroso Sherry, Waitrose 13 £5.00

Solera Jerezana Dry Amontillado, Waitrose 16 £5–7
Stunning rich, dry, crème brûlée edge. Marvellous cockle-warmer

Solera Jerezana Dry Oloroso, Waitrose 16.5 £5–7
Fabulous chilled as an aperitif. Dry toffee fruit with a hint of almond

Solera Jerezana Old Oloroso, Waitrose 16.5 £5–7
Roast walnuts, herbs, molasses, malt whisky (very subtle) – what a marvellous wine.

Vintage Warre Quinta da Cavadinha 1987 17.5 £13–20
A magnificently complete port. It has a chewy texture (vibrant tannins), lovely complex fruit of immense depths and sunny ripeness, and lovely balance. It is a wine to stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood, stun the soul.

SPARKLING WINES

ASDA

Asti Spumante NV, Asda 11 £5.00

Cava Brut, Asda 16.5 £5.00
Utterly superb. It's better than Krug at £100. More authentic value for money, unpretentious freshness and classic dryness

Cava Medium Dry, Asda 13 £5.00

Cava Rosado 1998, Asda 13.5 £5.00
Very flinty and rich.

Champagne Brut NV, Asda 13.5 £10–13

Champagne Brut Rosé NV, Asda 13 £10–13

Charles Lafitte Cuvée 2000 NV 13 £13–20

Crémant de Bourgogne 1997 14 £5–7

De Bregille Vintage 1995 18 £13–20

Nicholas Feuillate Blanc de Blancs NV 13 £13–20

Nottage Hill Sparkling Chardonnay 1996 15 £5–7

Rondel Cava NV 14 £5–7
Very soft and subtly rich.

Seaview Sparkling NV 14.5 £5–7
One of the best-value bubblies on the planet. Defeats the idea of Champagne at twice the price.

Stamps Sparkling 1999 15 £5–7
Delicately delicious. Lovely hint of raspberry fruit on the finish.

Three Choirs Cuvée Brut (England) 10 £5–7

Vintage Cava 1996, Asda 15.5 £5–7

Vintage Champagne 1993, Asda 14.5 £13–20

BOOTHS

Bollinger Grande Année 1990 11 £20+

Brossault Rosé Champagne NV 13 £13–20

Bruno Paillard Champagne NV 15 £13–20

Champagne Barone-Fuenté Brut NV 15 £10–13
Rather grand in its rich croissant-edged fruitiness yet dryness.

Champagne Fleurie NV (organic) 10 £13–20

Champagne Gremillet NV 14 £13–20

Chandon Argentina Brut NV 15 £7–10

Brilliant alternative to Champagne
Great aperitif style.

Chapelle de Cray Brut Rosé 1993 (France) 13 £5.00

Concerto Lambrusco 1998 (Italy) 16 £5–7
Sparkling red wine? From Italy? Called Lambrusco? Ah! But this is the real thing. Magically yet impishly fruity, it is marvellous with charcuterie at the start of a meal.

Crémant d'Alsace Cuvée Prestige (France) 13 £7–10

Deutz NV (New Zealand) 15 £10–13
Better than a thousand Champagnes.

Hunter's Miru Miru 1996 (New Zealand) 15 £10–13

Palau Brut Cava NV 10 –£5.00

Pétillant de Listel, Traditional 12 –£2.50

Piper Heidsieck Brut Champagne NV 15 £13–20
Very fine and classy.

Prosecco Zonin NV (Italy) 16 –£5.00
One of the world's great unsung bubbly wine bargains. Deliciously dry with a hint of strawberry.

BUDGENS

Budgens Brut Champagne NV 12 £13–20
Not in the same league as the Cava.

Budgens Rosé Champagne NV 10 £13–20
Rather feeble as it finishes.

Cava la Vuelta NV 14 –£5.00
Very lemony and thick.

Hardys Stamp Sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir NV 14 £5–7
Richer than most

Lindauer Brut NV 15 £5–7
An excellent, sane alternative to overpriced Champagnes.

CWS

Australian Quality Sparkling Wine, Co-op 14 –£5.00

Blossom Hill NV (USA) 13 £5–7

Brut Sparkling Chardonnay NV, Co-op (France) 13.5 –£5.00

Cava Brut NV, Co-op 14 –£5.00

De Bracieux Champagne NV 11 £10–13

Jacob's Creek Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV (Australia) 15 £5–7

Moscato Spumante NV, Co-op 11 –£5.00
Very sweet.

Sparkling Saumur NV, Co-op 13 £5–7
Very earthy.

Tempranillo Brut Red NV, Co-op 13.5 £5–7
I like sparkling red but Tempranillo lacks the weight to counterpoint the crisp bubbles. Still, it's a brave stab. Might work best with tandoori dishes.

Y2K Champagne NV 13 £13–20

KWIK SAVE

Asti Spumante NV, Somerfield 14 £5–7
Very, very sweet and old grandadish.

Cava Brut NV, Somerfield 14.5 £5.00
Not bone-dry, but not overly fruity either. Delicious aperitif.

Cava Rosado NV, Somerfield 14 £5.00
A solid rosé, if not an exciting one.

Moscato Fizz, Somerfield 14 £2.50
Sweet and Muscaty. Makes a pleasant summer tipple.

Prince William Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Somerfield 14 £10–13
Very fruity, has hints of wild strawberries. Delicious aperitif. Limited distribution.

M&S

Bluff Hill Sparkling Wine (New Zealand) 13 £5–7

Cava Brut NV (Spain) 13.5 £5–7

Cava Medium Dry NV (Spain) 12 £5–7

Champagne de St-Gall Blanc de Blancs NV 15 £13–20

Champagne de St-Gall Brut NV 13.5 £13–20

Champagne Desroches NV 13.5 £13–20

Champagne Oudinot Grand Cru 1993 13 £13.20

Cuvée Orpale Grand Cru 1990 12 £20+
Charming! Love it! But at £5.99 not £25.

Gold Label Sparkling Chardonnay NV 16 £5–7
Excellent, dry, subtly fruity bubbly – elegance and classic tailoring at a third of the price of a comparable Champagne.

Oudinot Brut Champagne 13 £10–13
Stewed apple edge to it.

Vintage Cava 1994 15 £7.10

Veuve Truffeau Colombard/Chardonnay Brut 13.5 £5.00

MAJESTIC

Ayala Champagne NV 15 £13–20
Decidedly prim and very French.

Ayala Champagne Rosé NV 11 £13–20

Bouvet-Ladubay Saumur NV 10 £7–10
I just find the fruit so gauche and ripe.

Cava Verano, Freixenet NV 15.5 £5.00

Conde de Caralt Cava Brut NV 16.5 £5–7
As elegant a Cava as they come Knocks a thousand Champagnes into oblivion.

De Telmont Grande Réserve Champagne NV 14.5 £13–20
Very elegant and a touch hoity toity.

Freixenet Cuvée DS 1996 16.5 £10–13
Stunning complexity and crispness here. A great sparkling wine. Better than Krug

Gloria Ferrer Royal Cuvée 1991 13 £13–20
Very sweaty aroma.

Jacquart Brut Mosaïque Champagne NV 12 £13–20

Jacquart Champagne 1992 12 £20+
Very warm. Not overkeen on warm Champagne.

Lamberhurst Brut NV (England) 8 £7–10
One of the more repulsive bubblies made. Why bother with grapes so uncongenial?

Langlois Crémant de Loire NV (France) 15 £7–10
Charming muted richness and crisp acid attack.

Langlois Crémant de Loire Rosé NV (France) 16 £7–10
Terrific! A real excuse to make a rosé bubbly. Better than a thousand Champagnes

Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand) 16 £7–10
Very elegant and classically cut. Very smart on the taste buds.

Oeil de Perdrix Champagne NV 16 £13–20
A delicious new blend of the well-established Majestic bubbly. It's an onion-skin colour, or partridge's eye, and it's extremely dry and well wrought.

Taittinger Champagne Brut NV 12 £20+

Yellowglen Pinot Noir Chardonnay NV (Australia) 13.5 £7–10

MORRISONS

Asti Spumante Gianni (Italian) 14 £5.00

Barramundi Sparkling NV (Australia) 15 £5.00
Hugely slurpable and entertaining.

Brut de Channay NV (France) 11 £5–7

Champagne Philippe Prie NV 12 £10–13
Lemony and dry.

Chapel Hill Chardonnay Pinot Noir NV (Hungary) 12 £5.00

'M' Vintage Cava 1996 15.5 £5–7
Very thick and rich but not cloying. Great with smoked salmon.

Mumm Cuvée Napa Brut NV (California) 14 £7–10
Expensive elegance, but better value than so many Champagnes.

Paul Herard Champagne Brut NV 12 £10–13

Paul Herard Demi Sec Champagne (half-bottle) 13.5 £5–7

Reminger Sparkling Brut NV (France) 10 £5.00

Santa Carolina Chardonnay Brut 1996 (Chile) 13 £5–7
A touch feeble as it dries out on the tongue.

Seaview Brut NV (Australia) 14 £5–7

Seaview Brut Rosé (Australia) 13.5 £5–7
Very rich and ripe.

Sparkling Zero (alcohol-free) 0 –£2.50
And zero is what it scores Why? It isn't wine. It's a crime.

ODDBINS

Billecart-Salmon Cuvée Nicholas-François Billecart Brut 1991 14 £20+
Fine Wine Stores only.

Bonnet Brut Heritage NV 13.5 £13–20
Very fruity for a champers.

Cuvee Napa by Mumm Blanc de Blancs NV 13.5 £10–13

Deutz Marlborough Cuvée (New Zealand) 13.5 £7–10

Henri Harlin Brut NV 15 £13–20

Lindauer Special Reserve Brut NV 14.5 £7–10

Mumm Cordon Rouge Cuvée Limitée 1990 13 £20+

Pierre Gimonnet et Fils Brut Gastronome 1995 13.5 £13–20
Not as incisive as its cheaper sister.

Pierre Gimonnet et Fils 'Cuis 1er Cru' Blanc de Blancs Brut NV 16 £13–20
Hugely elegant and civilised. Beats many a bubbly costing three times more.

Ployez-Jacquemart Brut NV 13 £13–20
Lot of money for the style.

Yellowglen Vintage Brut 1995 (Australia) 14 £7–10

SAFEWAY

Albert Etienne Champagne Brut Rosé NV, Safeway 13 £13–20

Albert Etienne Champagne Vintage 1993, Safeway 13 £13–20

Canard Duchene Champagne Brut NV 14 £13–20

Chandon Argentina NV 15 £7–10
Brilliant alternative to Champagne. Great aperitif style.

Chandon Australia NV 15.5 £7–10
Elegant and rich – not always a combination which is apparent in fine bubbly but here it works.

Chenin Brut, Vin Mousseux de Qualité (France) 14 –£5.00

Conde de Caralt Cava Brut NV 16.5 £5–7
As elegant a Cava as they come. Knocks a thousand Champagnes into oblivion. Top 280 stores from mid June.

Cuvée Signe Champagne, Nicolas Feuillate NV 14.5 £13–20

Freixenet Cava Rosada Brut NV 13.5 £5–7

Graham Beck Brut NV (South Africa) 14 £5–7

Lambrusco Rosé Light, Safeway (4% vol) 11.5 –£2.50

Lanson Champagne Demi-Sec Ivory Label NV 12 £13–20

Le Bron de Monceny Chardonnay Brut NV 12 –£5.00

Le Bron de Monceny Merlot/Gamay Brut NV 15.5 –£5.00
Superb juicy bubbly red for game dishes. Exuberant, sweet, gushing.
Selected stores

Le Monferrine Moscato d'Asti 1999 (5%) 13 –£3.50
Deliciously Muscat and ripe melon sweetness and bubbles. That's the recipe. Great chilled in summer. Great for sweet talking to the neighbours.

Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand) 14 £7–10
I'd prefer it under a fiver but then I ask the impossible.

Louis Roederer Champagne Brut Premier NV 13 £20+

Merlot/Gamay Brut NV (France) 14 £5.00

Nicolas Feuillate Champagne Blanc de Blancs NV 14 £13–20

Piper Heidsieck Champagne Vintage 1990 10 £20+
Thirty quid? I'd rather put it on a horse.

Pommery Brut Royal Champagne NV 12 £20+

Sélection XXI, Champagne, Nicolas Feuillate NV 13 £13–20

SAINSBURY'S

Asti, Sainsbury's (Italy) 13 –£5.00

Australian Sparkling Wine, Sainsbury's 13 –£5.00

Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Sainsbury's 16 £10–13
One of the best-value Champagnes around. Really elegant.

Cava Brut NV, Sainsbury's 16.5 –£5.00
Still a flagship sparkling wine: crisp, clean, fresh, classic. Better than hundreds of Champagnes.

Cava Rosado Brut, Sainsbury's 15 –£5.00

Champagne Canard Duchene NV 14 £13–20

Champagne Chanoine 1990 15.5 £13–20

Champagne Charles Heidsieck Mis en Cave 1995 14.5 £20+

Champagne Demi-Sec NV, Sainsbury's 14 £10–13

Champagne Jeanmaire Brut 1990 14 £13–20

Champagne Krug Grande Cuvée 10 £20+

Champagne Lanson Black Label Brut NV 13.5 £13–20

Champagne Laurent-Perrier NV 13.5 £20+

Champagne Louis Roederer NV 13 £20+

Champagne Nicolas Feuillate Premier Cru NV 14 £13–20

Champagne Perrier-Jouët NV 14 £13–20

Champagne Pol Roger 1990 13 £20+

SPARKLING WINES

Champagne Pommery Brut Royal NV 13 £20+

Champagne Premier Cru Extra Dry, Sainsbury's 15 £13–20
Extra dry? Don't you believe it. It hums with soft, raspberry-scented fruit. Also available in 1.5 litres. Most stores

Champagne Veuve Clicquot Grande Dame 1990 12 £20+

Chardonnay Brut, Méthode Traditionelle, Sainsbury's (France) 16 £5–7

Freixenet Cava Rosada NV 13.5 £5–7

Grand Cru Millennium Champagne 1995, Sainsbury's 13 £13–20
To be drunk only by those born in the year of the vintage.

Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay Brut 1998 15 £5–7
Dry, subtly nutty and rich. Most stores

Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay/ Pinot Noir Brut NV 14 £5–7
Selected stores.

Jacobs Creek Chardonnay/Pinot Noir Brut NV (Australia) 13 £5–7

Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand) 16 £7–10
Very elegant and classically cut. Very smart on the taste buds. Selected stores.

Millennium Vintage Cava 1997, Sainsbury's 13 £5–7

Mumm Champagne Brut NV 13 £13–20
Most stores

Piper Heidsieck Brut NV 15 £13–20
Very fine and classy. Most stores.

Sekt, Medium Dry, Sainsbury's (Germany) 13 £5.00

Vin Mousseux Brut, Sainsbury's (France) 13 £5.00

Vintage Blanc de Blancs Champagne 1993, Sainsbury's 14 £13–20
Most stores.

SOMERFIELD

Asti Spumante NV, Somerfield 14 £5–7
Very very sweet and old grandadish.

Australian Quality Sparkling NV, Somerfield 14 £5–7

Australian Sparkling Chardonnay 1995, Somerfield 14 £5–7
A very fruity bubbly, not subtle but equally not OTT.

Cava Brut NV, Somerfield 14.5 £5.00
Not bone-dry, but not overly fruity either. Delicious aperitif.

Cava Rosada NV, Somerfield 14 £5.00
A solid rosé, if not an exciting one.

Crémant de Bourgogne, Caves de Bailly 1998, Somerfield 13.5 £5–7

Devauzelle Champagne NV 13.5 £10–13

Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand) 14 £7–10

I'd prefer it under a fiver but then I ask the impossible.

Millennium Champagne 1990, Somerfield 13 £13–20

Moscato Fizz, Somerfield 14 £2.50
Sweet and Muscaty. Makes a pleasant summer tipple.

Mumm Cuvee Napa Brut NV (California) 14 £7–10
Expensive elegance, but better value than so many Champagnes.

Nicolas Feuillate Brut Premier Cru NV 14 £13–20

Nottage Hill Sparkling Chardonnay 14.5 £5–7

Pierre Larousse Chardonnay Brut NV (France) 16 £5.00
Superb value for money. Has good rich fruit but it's serious and dry and not remotely tart or blowsy. Real bargain elegance here.

Prince William Blanc de Blancs Champagne NV, Somerfield 13.5 £13–20

Prince William Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Somerfield 14 £10–13
Very fruity, has hints of wild strawberries. Delicious aperitif. Limited distribution

Prince William Champagne 1er Cru, Somerfield 15.5 £13–20
A very classy blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Prince William Champagne Rosé NV, Somerfield 13 £13–20

Prince William Millennium Champagne 1990, Somerfield 13 £13–20

Seaview Brut Rosé 13.5 £5–7
Very rich and ripe.

Seaview Pinot Noir/ Chardonnay 1995 (Australia) 15 £7–10

South African Sparkling Sauvignon, Somerfield 16 £5–7
Gorgeous, just gorgeous! Loads of personality and flavour – yet it's stylish withal.

Vintage Cava 1996, Somerfield 15.5 £5–7
Real classy bubbly. Better than so many Champagnes. Limited distribution

SPAR

Cava Brut NV, Spar 15 £5.00
Very rich and creamy but the firm structure holds the fruit well in. A bubbly for food, what's more.

Marqúes de Prevel Champagne NV, Spar 10 £13–20
Blatant, overpriced, murky. The Cava at a third of the price is a much tastier beast.

TESCO

Australian Sparkling Wine NV, Tesco 13 £5.00
Very corpulent and sluggishly fruity. For a bubbly it's too fruity for me.

Blanc de Blancs Champagne NV, Tesco 13.5 £13–20

Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Tesco 14 £13–20

Cava NV, Tesco 15 –£5.00
Delicously dry and deftly interwoven fruit and acid.

Chapel Down Epoch Brut NV (England) 11 £5–7

Charles Duret Blanc de Blancs Brut NV 13 –£5.00

Charles Duret Blanc de Blancs Demi-Sec NV 12 –£5.00
Too sweet for me

Cockatoo Ridge Black Sparkling NV 16.5 £7–10
One of the best sparkling reds around. It has great dry richness and loads of energy. A terrific wine for game dishes. 100 selected stores

Demi-Sec Champagne, Tesco 13 £10–13

Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay/Pinot Noir Sparkling NV 14 £5–7
Very fruity but not overbaked.

Hungarian Sparkling Chardonnay NV, Tesco 13.5 –£5.00
Touch of florid fruit on the finish.

Jacob's Creek Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV (Australia) 15 £5–7

Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut NV 11 £20+

Laurent-Perrier Vintage 1990 13 £20+

Les Etoiles Organic Sparkling Wine NV 12 £5–7
Very soft/dry approach and sullen – though fruity, it's not happy. Not at all stores.

Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand) 14 £7–10
I'd prefer it under a fiver but then I ask the impossible.

Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand) 16 £7–10
Very elegant and classically cut. Very smart on the taste buds.

Moët Vintage 1993 13.5 £20+

Nicolas Feuillate Brut NV 13.5 £13–20

Pirie 1996 13 £13–20
Overpriced for the leanness of the style. Wine Advisor Stores only

Premier Cru Champagne Brut NV 15 £10–13

Rosé Cava NV, Tesco 13.5 –£5.00

South African Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc 1998, Tesco 14.5 –£5.00

Taittinger Champagne Brut NV 12 £20+

Valdivieso Sparkling Merlot 1998 16 £5–7
What fun! Mellow, ripe, rich, hugely fruity and great with spicy food. Try it with a vindaloo. It's a triumph. 30 stores only.

Veuve du Vernay Brut NV 14 £7–10
Soft and elegant. Most stores.

THRESHER

Bollinger RD 1985 13 £20+

Bollinger Special Cuvée NV 14 £20+

Canard Duchene Charles VII NV 14.5 £20+

Charles Heidsieck 'Mis en Caves 1995' NV 13 £20+

Cool Ridge Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir Brut NV (Hungary) 12 ~£5.00

Deutz NV (New Zealand) 15 £10–13
Better than a thousand Champagnes.

Gosset Grande Millésime 1989 15 £20+

Gosset Grande Réserve NV 14 £20+

Green Point Brut 1996 15 £10–13

Krug Grande Cuvée NV 13 £20+

Krug Vintage 1989 13.5 £20+

La Corunna Cava NV 15 £5.00

Lanson Vintage Gold Label 1993 13.5 £20+

Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand) 14 £7–10
I'd prefer it under a fiver but then I ask the impossible.

Lindauer Brut Rosé NV (New Zealand) 15 £7–10
A truly delicious rosé of real style.

Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand) 16 £7–10
Very elegant and classically cut. Very smart on the taste buds.

Louis Roederer Brut Vintage 1993 (magnum) 13 £20+

Mumm Cuvee Napa Brut (California) 16 £7–10
So much more assertive, refined, tasty and sanely priced than its French cousin I'm surprised there aren't serious riots in Reims

Out of the Blue Lightly Sparkling (Italy) (4%) 10 ~£3.50

Perrier-Jouët Brut Vintage 1992 12 £20+

Pinot Grigio Frizzante NV (Italy) 13 ~£5.00
Crisp and elegant with a subtle hint of underripe apricot.

Piper Heidsieck Rare 1985 17 £20+
My favourite: toast, nuts, fruit, finesse, dry, liveliness, not too old – perfect maturity. Bottoms Up only.

Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill Cuvée 1988 16 £20+
Immensely proud, dry, witty, plump yet fleet of foot. Goes extremely well with cucumber sandwiches with mint. Also smoked salmon. Bottoms Up only.

Pommery Vintage 1991 12 £20+

Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame 1990 16 £20+
Rather lovely – achieves dryness yet texture and a suggestion of fruit.

UNWINS

Alain Thienot Brut 1990 10 £20+
Worth a tenner at most. It's highly drinkable but far too highly priced.

Cuvée Princesse de Aimery Blanquette de Limoux 1997 13 £5–7
Odd stale nut finish.

Duchatel Blanc de Blancs Brut NV 12.5 £13–20

Duchatel Brut Champagne NV 13 £10–13
Tarty stuff

Duchatel Champagne Brut 1994 13.5 £13–20
Elegance here. The best by far of the Duchatel wines at Unwins.

Duchatel Rosé Brut Champagne NV 11 £13–20
Nowt much for £16.

Freixenet Cava Brut NV 13.5 £5–7

Graham Beck Brut NV (South Africa) 14 £5–7

Jacob's Creek Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV (Australia) 15 £5–7

Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand) 14.5 £7–10

Pelorus Brut 1995 18 £10–13
Better than Krug. It's got beautifully smoky fruit, richness with elegance, bite with delicacy.

VICTORIA WINE

Blossom Hill Sparkling NV (USA) 13 £5–7

Bollinger RD 1985 13 £20+

Bollinger Special Cuvée NV 14 £20+

Canard Duchene Charles VII NV 14.5 £20+

Charles Heidsieck Mis en Caves 1995 13 £20+

Cool Ridge Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir Brut NV (Hungary) 12 £5.00

Cuvée Napa Brut, Mumm NV 16 £7–10
So much more assertive, refined, tasty and sanely priced than its French cousin I'm surprised there aren't serious riots in Reims.

Deutz Marlborough Cuvée NV 13.5 £10–13

Gosset Grande Millésime 1989 15 £20+

Gosset Grande Réserve NV 14 £20+

Green Point Brut 1996 15 £10–13

Krug Grande Cuvée NV 13 £20+

Krug Vintage 1989 13.5 £20+

La Corunna Cava NV 15 £5.00

Lanson Vintage Gold Label 1993 13.5 £20+

Louis Roederer Brut Vintage 1993 (magnum) 13 £20+

Marquis de la Tour Demi-Sec NV (France) 8 £5.00
A touch revolting.

Marquis de la Tour Rosé NV (France) 14 £5.00

Piper Heidsieck Rare 1985 17 £20+
My favourite: toast, nuts, fruit, finesse, dry, liveliness, not too old – perfect maturity. Martha's Vineyard only.

Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill Cuvée 1988 16 £20+
Immensely proud, dry, witty, plump yet fleet of foot. Goes extremely well with cucumber sandwiches with mint. Also smoked salmon Martha's Vineyard only.

Pommery Vintage 1991 12 £20+

Seaview Brut Rosé 12 £5.7

Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame 1990 16 £20+
Rather lovely – achieves dryness yet texture and a suggestion of fruit.

WAITROSE

Alexandre Bonnet Brut Rosé NV (France) 12 £13–20

Banrock Station Sparkling Shiraz NV (Australia) 17 £7–10
One of the most delicious sparkling Shirazes I've tasted. Concentrated blackcurrant fruit, with spicy plums and a hint of savoury leather, with huge but elegant tannins, and a rousing finish. A magnificent wine for the festive fowl.

Brut Vintage 1990, Waitrose 13 £13–20

Cava Brut NV, Waitrose 15.5 £5.00
Terrific blend of local grapes produces individuality and bite.

Champagne Blanc de Blancs NV, Waitrose 15 £13–20

Champagne Blanc de Noirs NV, Waitrose 15 £10–13
One of the more refined and finesse ful successful Blanc de Noirs at the own label level.

Champagne Brut NV, Waitrose 12.5 £13–20

Champagne Fleury 1993 13 £20+
At this price, this organic Champagne seems vastly under-exciting and overpriced. Clean and crisp but not great.

Champagne Fleury Brut NV 18.5 £13–20
A biodynamic Champagne? How did someone wean the vignerons off pesticides and herbicides and on to the astrologic ideas of Rudolf Steiner? In Reims? With that weird climate? It's a miracle akin to discovering John Major campaigning for the Red Brigade. The wine? Superb. All Pinot grapes (fifteen acres of), loads of calm, controlled fruit, immense class (without pretension – no Krug tobacco edging), beautiful fruit, and a lovely finish. It has wonderful texture which, as with all outstanding Champagnes, combines a seemingly soft fruitiness (hint of wild strawberry from the Pinot Noir grapes) with a crisp yet warm finish. One of the best Champagnes I've tasted – ever. For the money, it's a steal. Waitrose has it exclusively, and they have only 1,600 cases of it (yet all Waitrose branches have it). It knocks Moët (which is pricier) into the most cocked of cocked chapeaux.

Chandon Argentina Brut NV 15 £7–10
Brilliant alternative to Champagne. Great aperitif style.

Chandon Australia Brut NV 15.5 £7–10
Elegant and rich – not always a combination which is apparent in fine bubbly but here it works.

Chapel Hill Pinot Noir/Chardonnay NV 15 £5.00
Nicely calm fruit here. Finishes well and confidently (like a poem by Robert Graves).

Charles Heidsieck Champagne Blanc de Blancs 1982 20 £20+
Perfect Champagne. As good as it is possible for Chardonnay to get with bubbles. It is perfectly mature, rich and complex but finally dry and delicate. It is so elegant it defines what Champagne is. Only from Waitrose Direct.

Charles Heidsieck 13.5 £20+
Réserve Mise en Cave en 1993

Clairette de Die Tradition 14 £5–7
(half-bottle) (France)

Crémant de Bourgogne 14 £5–7
Blanc de Noirs, Lugny

Crémant de Bourgogne 14 £7–10
Rosé NV (France)
Lollipop richness here.

Cuvée Royale Blanquette 13 £5–7
de Limoux NV
Odd nutty richness

Duc de Marre Special 13.5 £13–20
Cuvée Champagne Brut
Non-Vintage

Jacob's Creek Sparkling 13 £5–7
Chardonnay/Pinot Noir
NV (Australia)
Great new entrant to the Aussie sparkling wine stakes. Has fruit and essential crispness of attack.

Le Mesnil Blanc de Blancs 14 £13–20
Grand Cru Champagne
Brut Non-Vintage
Rich hints of cherry and pastry.

Lindauer Brut NV (New 14 £7–10
Zealand)
I'd prefer it under a fiver but then I ask the impossible.

Saumur Brut NV, 14 £5–7
Waitrose

Seaview Brut NV 14 £5–7

Seaview Brut Rosé NV 13.5 £5–7
Very rich and ripe.

Sparkling Burgundy NV 13 £5–7
(France)
Curious jam-tart rich middle to the fruit.

Taittinger Comtes de 13 £20+
Champagne Blanc de
Blancs 1990
Lot of money here. Not worth it by five times. Only from Waitrose Direct.

WINE CELLAR

Jansz Tasmanian NV 12 £7–10
Very fat and florid and a touch out of breath. Had the grapes been exercising overmuch?

Pelorus NV (New 17 £10–13
Zealand)
One of the most richly elegant bubblies on the planet in this blend (almost all Chardonnay). It has to be compared with absurdities like Krug to get some idea of the value here

PART 3

A TO Z OF RETAILERS

ASDA

When I was invited to organise a wine tasting in the cellars of the Café Royal for a small group of citizens, all financial advisers forsooth, I anticipated, rather naïvely, that I could include the venerable vintages the Café has in its cellars. But only the wines on the restaurant's list were available and I was horrified: they were highly priced, in some cases obscenely so, and desperately uninspiring. Asda came to my rescue, insisted on providing for free some of its own wines for the tasting, and two of them were marvellous 17-pointers.

The first was Asda's own-label Manzanilla (17 out of 20, £4.97), which is individually fruity – or perhaps vegetal is a more accurate simile – with a tealeaf edginess. It is an aromatic sherry of charm and unusual, if subtle, richness. Well textured and soft (not as bone dry as most Manzanillas but no less characterful), it is so approachable it might convert those who have found the uncompromising style of this wine austere in the past. This specimen is one of the planet's most civilised summer aperitifs, well chilled in the glass. One of the most popular reds at the Café tasting was 35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 (17 points, £4.49) from Chile, which went down gloriously with the audience, more so when the price tag was revealed. Dark, rich, firm yet supple, wonderfully seriously fruity (leather, spice, blackcurrants) and hugely lingering, it provides a generous mouthful.

Of course, the financial advisers were gently gobsmacked, not only by the fruit in the wines but by the chutzpah of Asda, which they conceived as a place at which no civilised individual, pinstriped and bow tied, would be seen dead buying wine. They are, sadly, right. You don't see hordes of wine buffs in Asda with the exception of the odd, perceptive *Guardian* reader. I say this because Asda's average bottle price is around £3, a touch less perhaps, and this compares with £3.49 for Tesco and a little higher at Sainsbury's. In other words (and pro wine buyers at supermarkets worry about these figures a great deal), the average price which Asda customers are prepared to pay for a bottle of wine is less than at its competitors.

Asda would like to raise this average price. It wants to encourage its customers to try more expensive wines, but two-thirds of them aren't biting. But Asda is still putting great efforts into some great inexpensive

wine ranges around the £3.50/£4.99 mark · witness the Tramontane range and it has an excellent set of buyers. Russell Burgess and Alistair Morrell have been doing a first-rate job for some years now and in 1999 they pulled off something of a coup when they hired the extremely experienced and enthusiastic Sarah Marsay to join them. Indeed, so excited was she at landing the job that she changed her name to Marsh (via a new husband in order to effect the change in the simplest way).

Asda is an old hand at marriage. It was set to wed Woolworth at one stage, only to jilt this retailer prior to striding down the aisle. It is now, as everyone in the UK must surely know by now, the bride of the massive US outfit, Wal Mart – the retailer which is sending shudders, so the tabloid press make out, down the backs of every retailer in the land. Wal Mart will do nothing to lift the average price people spend on a bottle of wine at Asda but surely all those folk buying their cheap TVs at an Asda/Wal-Mart superduperstore will be tempted to add a few bottles of wine to their trolleys, will they not?

The conclusion of the successful £6.7 billion takeover of Asda by Wal-Mart was patently the highlight of Asda's year and this has undoubtedly added a new competitive atmosphere to UK shopping. *Retail Week* magazine rather blandly put it that 'Wal-Mart's entry into the UK will dramatically change the face of retailing in this country' Wal-Mart said that it intended to double Asda's profits (to around £1 billion) within five years.

Asda are a feisty lot, with or without Wal-Mart. They got up Sainsbury's nose by claiming that it now occupied the number-two slot in the grocery league table headed by Tesco (16.53% of the market to Sainsbury's 16.50%). Sainsbury's said Asda had misrepresented the research data by Taylor Nelson Sofres. In the same issue, *Retail Week* reported that Archie Norman, the man who once ran Asda full time and who is now the Tory's Shadow Minister for Europe, was frustrated by being in opposition. It was said Sainsbury's wanted him to run their show. But he's stayed where he was. Maybe he should persuade Wal-Mart to buy Europe for him to run. They can probably afford it. (Mr Norman, in spite of being a mere shadow, came nineteenth in one of those fatuous lists, this one in *The Sunday Times*, of the Top 20 most powerful men in British business.)

It was from Mr Norman that Asda learned how to spring newsworthy surprises. It found a radical way to attract customers into its stores by staging pop concerts. The rock band Younger Younger 28s described by *Melody Maker* as 'the best new band in Britain', was signed up to go on a six-date tour of Asda supermarkets.

Asda has, though, a solid sense of its social commitments. *The Times* reported that Asda and Tesco have asked toy-maker Mattel to manufacture Barbie dolls with a fuller figure following worries that Barbie's skinny frame was an unhealthy image for young girls and could encourage eating disorders. At the same time, Asda launched a 'value range' of organic products and announced plans to open fifteen home-delivery centres across southern England by 2004.

Asda was said to be recruiting some 27,000 new staff over the next five years and that it was considering replacing its in-store hair salons with mobile phone concessions. (For the life of me I can't see why they can't combine the two. Perfect fit, aren't they?) It also launched a domestic phone call service offering a pre-paid programme saving customers 62% on domestic and up to 85% on international calls. More imaginatively, it also launched a 'speakers corner in very town' idea encouraging customers as well as anyone else to use Asda car parks to voice their opinions. This idea might well require policing if it gets out of hand.

Most intriguing of all (to my mind) was the report in *Supermarketing* magazine that Asda was to increase its job sharing programme, a key factor behind this initiative being the need to persuade more female staff to apply for store manager jobs. Only 15 of Asda's 233 stores are run by women, yet it is, of course, women who make up the majority of the customers.

Except, in my limited experience, for the wine shelves. On all my visits to this retailer I would say that men outnumber women by five to three, and that the majority of the women who are there browsing around the wines have a male consort firmly in tow (usually pushing the trolley). These happy-couple trolleys are almost invariably full or half full of groceries, whereas the trolleys of the single men, that is to say the men shopping solo, are empty or have just a few cans of something or other rattling around. What does this reveal about Asda customers? Only that men head straight for what's on their minds, whereas women take a more leisurely approach. The Freudian implications of this are, of course, enormous.

Does the Asda male / female bias also tell us something deep and meaningful? I really have no idea. I do know that at other supermarkets the male / female bias is slightly different. Safeway seems to have more single men (on my visits); Sainsbury's more single women; Tesco I can't come to a view either way. At Waitrose I once saw a very tall fellow wearing a pink shirt, a psychedelic bow tie, a rose in the lapel of his blue pin-striped suit, perspiring as he filled his trolley to overflowing with bottles of wine. He

had a marvellous and very expensively acquired paunch, too. It stuck out like a torpedo.

Asda needs more wine customers like him. All the supermarkets need more customers like him.

Asda Stores Limited
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Leeds
LS11 5AD

Tel 0500 100055 Customer Service Line
Fax 0113 241 8666
www.asda.co.uk

ARGENTINIAN RED

Argentinian Bonarda 1999, Asda	14.5	£5.00
Argentinian Pinot Noir Oak Aged 1997, Asda	12	£5.00
Argentinian Red 1998, Asda	15.5	£3.50
Argentinian Sangiovese 1999, Asda	15.5	£5.00
Argentinian Syrah 1999, Asda	16	£5.00
Far Flung Malbec 1999	14	£5.00
Santa Julia Tempranillo Reserva 1999	14.5	£5–7
Santa Julia Tempranillo Selection 1999	16	£5–7

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Argentinian Chardonnay 1998, Asda	15.5	£5.00
Argentinian White NV, Asda	14	£3.50
Far Flung Viognier 1999	16	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Andrew Peace Cabernet Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Andrew Peace Mighty Murray 1999	13	£5.00
Andrew Peace Shiraz 1999	13	£5–7
Fox River Pinot Noir 1998	13	£5–7
Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/ Shiraz 1997	14	£5–7
Hardys Stamp Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1997	15	£5–7
Houghtons Shiraz 1998	15	£5–7
Karalta Cabernet 1999, Asda	12	£5.00

Karalta Red 1999, Asda	13.5	–£3.50
Karalta Shiraz/Cabernet 1999, Asda	13	–£3.50
Lindemans Bin 50 Shiraz 1998	14.5	–£5.00
Maglieri Shiraz 1998	15.5	£7–10
Mount Hurtle Grenache 1997	16	£5–7
Peter Lehmann Seven Surveys Mourvedre/Shiraz/Grenache 1997	16	£5–7
Rochcombe Pinot Noir 1998	12	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1997	15	£7–10
Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1998	15.5	£5–7
Rymill Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon/Cabernet Franc 1996	15.5	£7–10
Secession Xanadu Shiraz/Cabernet 1999	14.5	£5–7
South Australia Cabernet Sauvignon 1996, Asda	14	–£5.00
Vine Vale Grenache 1998 (Peter Lehmann)	15	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Andrew Peace Chardonnay 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Cranswick Nine Pines Vineyard Marsanne 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Hardys Chardonnay Semillon 1999	16	£5–7
Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay 1997	16.5	–£5.00
Hardys Stamp Riesling Traminer 1997	15	–£5.00
Houghton HWB 1998	16	£5–7
Karalta Chardonnay 1998, Asda	15.5	–£5.00
Karalta Chardonnay/Semillon 1999, Asda	13.5	–£3.50
Karalta Semillon 1999, Asda	14	–£5.00
Karalta White 1999, Asda	14	–£3.50
Maglieri Semillon 1999	16.5	£5–7
Mount Hurtle Chenin Blanc 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Penfolds Rawson's Retreat Bin 21 Semillon Chardonnay Colombard 1997	15	–£5.00
Peter Lehmann Eden Valley Riesling 1999	15.5	£5–7
Peter Lehmann The Barossa Semillon, 1998	16	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Semillon/Chardonnay 1997	15	£5–7
Rymill Sauvignon Blanc 1999	13.5	£5–7
Temple Bruer Chenin Blanc 1999	15.5	£5–7

BULGARIAN RED

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon, Svichtov 1995, Asda	14	–£5.00
Bulgarian Country Red, Asda	14	–£3.50

Bulgarian Oak Aged Cabernet Sauvignon, Svichtov 1993, Asda	15	£5.00

CHILEAN RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	17	£5.00
Casas del Bosque Merlot 1999	14	£5–7
Castillo de Molina Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15.5	£5–7
Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Asda	16.5	£5.00
Chilean Red 1997, Asda	14.5	£3.50
Cono Sur Merlot 1999	16	£5.00
Cono Sur Merlot Reserve 1999	16.5	£5–7
Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1999	16	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5.00
Casas del Bosque Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£5–7
Chilean Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Asda	15.5	£5.00
Chilean White 1999, Asda	16	£3.50
Cono Sur Chardonnay 1999	14	£5.00

CYPRIOT RED

Ancient Isle Red 1998	15.5	£3.50

ENGLISH WHITE

Three Choirs Coleridge Hill English White 1998	12	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Beaujolais Villages 1998, Asda	14	£5.00
Bourgeuil Domaine de l'Ereau 1999	13.5	£5–7
Buzet Cuvée 44 1997	15	£5.00
Château de Parenchere Bordeaux Superieure 1997	16.5	£5–7
Château Guerin Bellevue Saint Emilion 1997	16	£5–7
Château Haut Canteloupe Medoc 1998	16.5	£7–10
Château Lahore Bergez, Fitou 1998	16.5	£5.00
Château Vieux Gabiran 1999 (organic)	14	£5.00
Chenas 1997, Asda	14	£5.00
Claret NV, Asda	14.5	£3.50
Comte de Gasparin, Côtes du Rhône 1997	16	£5–7
Domaine de Picheral VdP d'Oc 1999 (organic)	15	£5.00
Domaine des Hardiers Anjou Villages 1999	16.5	£5.00
Domaine Pont Pinot Noir 1996	13	£5–7
La Domeque 'Vieilles Vignes' Syrah 1997	16	£5–7
Merlot, Vin de Pays d'Oc 1998, Asda	15	£3.50

Moulin a Vent Oak Aged 1997, Asda	13.5	£5–7
Oak Aged Côtes du Rhône 1999, Asda	15	–£5.00
Organic Claret Château Vieux Georget, Bordeaux 1998	15.5	£5–7
Reserve du Mouton 1997	13.5	£5–7
Tramontane Grenache VdP d'Oc 1998, Asda	16	–£5.00
Tramontane Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999, Asda	16	–£5.00
Tramontane Red VdP de l'Aude 1999, Asda	16	–£3.50
Tramontane Reserve Oak Aged Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998, Asda	14.5	–£5.00
Tramontane Reserve Syrah VdP d'Oc 1996, Asda	16.5	£5–7
Tramontane Syrah VdP d'Oc 1997, Asda	13.5	–£5.00
Tramontane Syrah/ Merlot VdP d'Oc 1997, Asda	14.5	–£3.50
Vacqueyras Domaine de l'Oiselet 1999	16.5	£5–7

FRENCH WHITE

Baron de Turckheim Gewürztraminer 1998	16	£7–10
Chablis Grand Cru Bougros 1996	13	£13–20
Chardonnay, Jardin de la France 1999	14	–£3.50
Chateauneuf-du-Pape Blanc 1997	13	£13–20
Chenin Blanc Loire 1999, Asda	14	–£3.50
La Domeque 'Tete de Cuvee' Vieilles Vignes VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Muscadet 1999, Asda	13	–£3.50
Oak Aged Côtes du Rhône Blanc 1998, Asda	12	–£3.50
Rosé d'Anjou 1998, Asda	12.5	–£3.50
Sancerre 1999	12	£5–7
St Veran Domaine des Deux Roches 1998	13	£5–7
Tramontane Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999, Asda	16	–£5.00
Tramontane Chardonnay/ Vermentino 1999, Asda	13.5	–£5.00
Tramontane Reserve Oak Aged Chardonnay 1997, Asda	14	–£5.00
Tramontane Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Asda	15	–£5.00
Tramontane Viognier 1999, Asda	15.5	–£5.00
Vouvray Denis Marchais 1999	10	–£5.00

GERMAN WHITE

Deidesheimer Hofstuck Riesling Kabinett 1997, Asda	11	–£5.00
Devil's Rock Riesling Kabinett 1997	14	–£5.00

Liebfraumilch Gold Seal 1997	13.5	~£3.50

HUNGARIAN RED

River Route Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15.5	~£3.50

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Badger Hill Hungarian Sauvignon 1999	14	~£3.50
Hungarian Medium Chardonnay 1999, Asda	12	~£3.50

ITALIAN RED

Barolo Veglio Angelo 1996	14	£7–10
Chianti 1999, Asda	12	~£3.50
Chianti Classico 1998, Asda	13.5	~£5.00
Chianti Classico Riserva 1997, Asda	14	£5–7
La Vis Trentino Oak Aged Merlot 1998, Asda	14	~£5.00
Organic Valpolicella 1999	13.5	~£5.00
Puccini Chianti Reserva 1997	14	£5.00
Sicilian Rosso NV, Asda	13.5	~£3.50
Trulli Primitivo del Salento 1999	14	£5.00
Tuscan Red 1999, Asda	13.5	~£3.50
Valpolicella Classico San Ciriaco 1998	15	£5–7
Valpolicella NV, Asda	13	~£3.50

ITALIAN WHITE

La Vis Pinot Grigio 1999, Asda	13.5	~£5.00
Lambrusco Bianco NV, Asda	13.5	~£3.50
Lambrusco Rosato NV, Asda	13	~£2.50
Oaked Soave 1998, Asda	14	~£5.00
Soave NV, Asda	14	~£3.50

NEW ZEALAND RED

Montana Cabernet Merlot 1998	16	£5–7

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5–7
Nobilo Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Bright Brothers Baga 1997	14	£5.00
Douro 1997	13	~£5.00
Duro Douro 1997	13.5	~£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Vinho Verde 1999, Asda	10	£3.50

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Cape Merlot 1999, Asda	13.5	~£5.00
Dumisani Ruby Cabernet/Merlot 1999	15.5	£5.00

Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz 1997	14	£5.00
Landskroon Merlot Reserve 1999	16	£5–7
Long Mountain Red NV	14	£5.00
Pinotage Reserve 1999, Asda	14	£5.00
Porcupine Ridge Syrah 1999	16	£5–7
South African Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Asda	14	£5.00
South African Pinotage 1999, Asda	13.5	£5.00
Van Loveren Cabernet Shiraz 1999	13	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Cape Chardonnay 1999, Asda	15.5	£3.50
Cape Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Asda	15.5	£5.00
First Vintage 2000	13.5	£5.00
Van Loveren Blanc de Noirs 2000	14	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Baron de Ley Reserva Rioja 1994	13	£5–7
Conde de Navasques 1997	15.5	£5.00
Don Darias Tinto NV	15.5	£3.50
Far Flung Cabernet Merlot 1999	13	£5.00
Fuentespina Crianza 1996	15.5	£7–10
Mont Marcal Crianza 1997	14	£5.00
Oaked Tempranillo 1998, Asda	16	£5.00
Rioja NV, Asda	14.5	£5.00
Spanish Oaked Red NV, Asda	13	£3.50
Valdepeñas Crianza 1995	15.5	£5.00
Vina Albali Gran Reserva 1991	16	£5–7

SPANISH WHITE

Bodegas Cerrosol Sauvignon Rueda 1998	15	£5.00
Moscatel de Valencia NV, Asda	16	£3.50
Spanish Oaked White NV, Asda	15.5	£3.50

USA RED

Arius Zinfandel 1998	12	£5.00
Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 (organic)	17	£7–10
California Red 1999, Asda	14	£3.50
California Syrah 1997, Asda	14.5	£5.00
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7

USA WHITE

Arius Californian Chenin Blanc 1998, Asda	14	£5.00

Bonterra Chardonnay 1998 (organic)	13.5	£7–10
Californian White 1999, Asda	13.5	£3.50

FORTIFIED WINES

Fine Ruby Port, Asda	14	£5–7
Manzanilla, Asda	17	£5–7
Tawny Port, Asda	15	£5–7

SPARKLING WINES

Asti Spumante NV, Asda	11	£5.00
Cava Brut, Asda	16.5	£5.00
Cava Medium Dry, Asda	13	£5.00
Cava Rosado 1998, Asda	13.5	£5.00
Champagne Brut NV, Asda	13.5	£10–13
Champagne Brut Rosé NV, Asda	13	£10–13
Charles Lafitte Cuvée 2000 NV	13	£13–20
Cremant de Bourgogne 1997	14	£5–7
De Bregille Vintage 1995	14	£13–20
Nicolas Feuillate Blanc de Blancs NV	13	£13–20
Nottage Hill Sparkling Chardonnay 1996	15	£5–7
Rondel Cava NV	14	£5–7
Seaview Sparkling NV	14.5	£5–7
Stamps Sparkling 1999	15	£5–7
Three Choirs Cuvée Brut (England)	10	£5–7
Vintage Cava 1996, Asda	15.5	£5–7
Vintage Champagne 1993, Asda	14.5	£13–20

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

BOOTHS

There were a few reports doing the rounds in summer 2000 about Tesco reverting to pounds and ounces because customers preferred this Britannic nostalgia to Continental litres and kilos, but I dismissed this as a practical joke. Tesco? Surely not. Booths? Absolutely. If any retailer listed in this book was going to turn the clock deliciously back, then Booths would be the one. Even the title 'supermarket' sits oddly on this retailer's head, even though its stores are set up as such, though confined to the northern shires. It does not lack ambition, however. In 1999 it set to roll out home shopping across Lakeland. Another move, indeed innovation, reported at that time was that Booths was stocking what was thought to be the first range of branded organic frozen vegetables in the UK.

The millennium began with the death of John Booth, father of Edwin, the current eponym running the show. He was seventy six and entered the business in 1946 as a shop assistant, later becoming chairman The spirit of Booths which revolves around a committed sense of grocery excellence and service to customers is very alive, and with the passing of the personal Sainsbury's presence at that supermarket may well mean that Booths, which was formed in 1847, is not only the oldest such establishment of its kind but the only one, along with Morrisons, where a descendant of the founder still has a hand on the tiller.

This tiller has turned in new and excitingly modern directions. Booths now has a huge and magnificently ambitious wine sales website masterminded by director of technology Chris Dee, who was, before Sally Holloway's arrival, the wine buyer here. I say 'has', and I hope 'has'; but I write these words the day after I enjoyed a pleasant pub lunch in August 2000 with Mr Dee and the launch date of the site is November, after the book goes to press.

(It isn't all wine at Booths. It was voted Beer Supermarket of the Year Award by the British Guild of Beer Writers on the eminently appropriate grounds that it stocks some 295 different beers, including some 119 bottled ales.)

Sally is the new pride of the Booths wine aisles and you can readily see, from the entries that follow, that the range has both widened and deepened.

It will never have the resources, unlike the giants, to invest vast amounts in many own-label wine ranges from the main producing countries, but shrewdness and taste are evident in the examples I have tasted, lending considerable weight to the claim that Booths may not be big but it's a jolly good place at which to buy wine.

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www.booths-supermarkets.co.uk

ARGENTINIAN RED

El Montonero Bonarda Barbera 1999 — 15.5 — £5–7

Finca el Retiro Malbec, Mendoza 1999 — 15 — £5–7

Libertad Malbec Bonarda 1999 — 15 — £5.00

Libertad Sangiovese Malbec 1998 — 15 — £5.00

Mission Peak Red NV — 15.5 — £3.50

Terrazas Alto Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 — 14.5 — £5–7

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

El Montonero Torrontes 1999 — 15 — £5.00

Libertad Chenin Sauvignon 1999 — 14.5 — £5.00

Terrazas Alto Chardonnay 1999 — 15.5 — £5–7

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Red Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Booths — 14 — £5.00

Australian Red, South Eastern Australia NV, Booths — 11 — £3.50

Brown Brothers Tarrango 1998 — 13 — £5.00

CV Capel Vale Shiraz 1997 — 14.5 — £7–10

d'Arenberg d'Arrys Original Shiraz/Grenache 1998 — 15 — £5–7

Ironstone Shiraz Grenache 1998 — 16.5 — £5–7

Knappstein Cabernet Franc 1998	15	£7–10
Marktree Premium Red 1998	11	£5.00
Penfolds Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	15	£10–13
Rosemount Estate Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15.5	£5–7
Wakefield Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5–7
Yaldara Grenache 1998	13.5	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Château Tahbilk Marsanne 1998	15.5	£5–7
Cranswick Botrytis Semillon 1996 (half-bottle)	15	£10–13
CV Capel Vale Unwooded Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
CV Capel Vale Verdelho 1998	16.5	£7–10
d'Arenberg The Olive Grove Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7
d'Arenberg White Ochre 1999	13	£5–7
Deakin Estate Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5.00
Hardys Stamp Riesling Gewürztraminer 1999	15.5	£5.00
Ironstone Semillon Chardonnay 1999	17	£5–7
Marktree White SE Australia 1999	13.5	£5.00
Ninth Island Chardonnay 1999	13	£7–10
Oxford Landing Viognier 1998	16	£5–7
Penfolds Bin 21 Rawson's Retreat Semillon/ Colombard/Chardonnay 1999	14	£5.00
Penfolds Clare Valley Organic Chardonnay/ Sauvignon Blanc 1998	15.5	£7–10
Riddoch Coonawarra Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7
Shaw & Smith Sauvignon Blanc 1998	15	£7–10

BULGARIAN RED

Boyar Cabernet Merlot 1998	12.5	£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Carmen Grande Vidure Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£7–10
Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1998	16.5	£5.00
Vistasur Cabernet Malbec 1998	14	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1998	14	£5–7
Tocornal White NV	11.5	£3.50
Via Vina Chardonnay 1999	14	£5.00
Vistasur Chardonnay Sauvignon Vistamar 1999	13	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Bergerac Organic Red 1998	14	£5.00
Bergerac Rouge NV, Booths	13	£3.50
Bourgogne Rouge Jean-Luc Joillet 1998	12.5	£5–7
Bourgueil Domaine Pierre Gautier 1995	15	£5.00
Cahors 1998	14	£5.00
Chapoutier La Ciboise Coteaux du Tricastin 1998	15.5	£5.00
Château Ducla, Bordeaux 1997	15	£5–7
Château l'Euziere Pic St Loup 1997	14.5	£5–7
Château Mayne-Vieil, Fronsac 1996	16.5	£5.00
Château Pierrail Bordeaux Superieur 1996	15	£5–7
Château Pouchaud-Larquey, Bordeaux 1996	15.5	£5–7
Chaume Arnaud Domaine Côtes du Rhône Villages 1998 (organic)	17	£7–10
Côtes du Rhône Villages Georges Darriaud 1998	13.5	£5–7
Domaine du Trillol Corbieres 1996	15.5	£5.00
Faugeres Gilbert Alquier 1997	15	£7–10
Fitou Madame Parmentier 1998	13.5	£5.00
Gigondas Domaine Paillere et Pied 1998	16	£7–10
Julienas Paul Boutinot 1997	11	£5–7
La Passion Rouge VdP de Vaucluse 1999	14	£3.50
La Reserve du Reverend Corbieres 1999	13.5	£5.00
Marcillac 1997	15	£5–7
Oak Aged Claret Bordeaux Superieur NV, Booths	14	£5.00
Old Git Grenache Syrah 1999	13.5	£5.00
Pernands Vergelesses, Cornu 1997	10	£7–10
Rasteau Domaine des Coteaux des Travers 1998	16.5	£5–7
Vin Rouge NV, Booths	11	£3.50

FRENCH WHITE

Bergerac Blanc NV, Booths	14	£3.50
Bordeaux Blanc Sec NV, Booths	13.5	£3.50
Bourgogne Chardonnay Domaine Joseph Matrot NV	12	£5–7
Chablis Domaine de l'Eglantiere 1998	10	£7–10
Château d'Angludet Rosé 1997	13	£5–7
Château Lamothe Vincent, Bordeaux 1999	14	£5.00
Château Petit Roubie, Coteaux du Pinet 1999 (organic)	13	£5.00

Château Pierrail Blanc Prestige 1996	15.5	£5–7
Château Pique-Segue, Montravel 1999	15	£3.00
Clos de Monestier Bergerac Blanc 1999	13.5	£5.00
Clos de Monestier Bergerac Rosé 1999	14.5	£5.00
Côtes du Rhône Chaume Arnaud 1998	16	£7–10
Domaine de Pellehaut Côtes de Gascogne 1999	15	£5.00
Domaine de Petit Roubie, Marsanne 1999 (organic)	15	£5.00
Edelzwicker Aimé Stentz 1998	14.5	£5.00
Gewürztraminer d'Alsace Turckheim 1999	15.5	£5–7
James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999	16	£5.00
La Passion Blanc VdP de Vaucluse 1999	15	£3.50
Louis Chatel Sur Lie VdP d'Oc 1999	14	£3.50
Muscadet Sur Lie La Roche Renard 1998	13.5	£5.00
Pouilly Fume les Cornets, Cailbourdin 1997	10	£7–10
Riesling d'Alsace Aimé Stentz 1997	13	£5–7
Sancerre Domaine du Petit Roy, Dezat 1998	14.5	£7–10
Vermentino Les Yeuses VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	£3.50
Vin Blanc NV, Booths	12	£3.50

GERMAN WHITE

Gau-Bickelheimer Kurfurstenstuck Auslese 1998	13	£5.00
Liebfraumilch NV, Booths	13	£3.50
Niersteiner Speigelberg Spatlese 1997	12	£5.00
Piesporter Michelsberg NV, Booths	13.5	£5.00
Riesling Louis Guntrum 1999	14	£5.00

GREEK RED

Vin de Crete Kourtaki 1998	13	£5.00

GREEK WHITE

Kretikos Vin de Crete Blanc Boutari 1999	13	£5.00

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Chapel Hill Oaked Chardonnay, Balaton Boglar NV	15.5	£3.50

ITALIAN RED

A Mano Primitivo Puglia 1999	15.5	£5–7
Amarone Classico Brigaldara 1994	15	£13–20
Archidamo Pervini Primitivo di Manduria 1997	15.5	£5–7

Barocco Rosso del Salento 1998	15	£3.50
Colli di Sasso Toscana 1998	14	£5.00
I Promessa Sangiovese Puglia 1999	13.5	£5.00
La Piazza Rosso 1999 (Sicily)	15	£3.50
La Prendina Falcone Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£10–13
Salice Salento Vallone 1997	14	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico Superiore, Viviani 1996	13.5	£7–10
Valpolicella Classico, Viviani 1997	12	£5–7
Valpolicella Ripasso Viviani 1994	14	£7–10
Vigna Flaminio, Brindisi Rosso 1996	15	£5–7

ITALIAN WHITE

La Piazza Bianco 1999 (Sicily)	13.5	£3.50
Le Rime Pinot Grigio/ Chardonnay 1999	13	£5.00
Sentito Cortese DOC Oltrepo Pavese 1998	13.5	£5.00
Soave Classico Pra 1999	13.5	£5–7
Vin Suspo Rosado Capezza 1999	13	£5–7

LEBANESE RED

Hochar Red 1995	10	£5–7

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Jackson Estate Riesling 1998	13.5	£5–7
Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£7–10
Vavasour Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£7–10

PORTUGUESE RED

Alfrocheiro Preto Dao 1996	10	£10–13
Alianca Floral Douro Reserva 1997	15.5	£5.00
Alta Mesa Red 1998	15	£3.50
Bela Fonte Baga 1998	14	£5.00
Cartuxa Evora Alentejo 1995	16	£7–10
Dao Dom Ferraz 1998	16.5	£5.00
Espiga 1998	15.5	£5.00
Foral Alianca Reserva, Douro 1997	14.5	£5.00
Portada Red Estremadura 1999	13.5	£5.00
Quinta da Villa Freire Douro 1996	15	£5–7
Quinta das Setencostas 1998	16.5	£5.00
Quinta de la Rosa Douro 1998	14	£5–7

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Helderberg Shiraz 1999	15	£5.00
Spice Route Andrew's Hope 1998	16.5	£5–7

Stormy Cape Cinsault/ Shiraz 1998	16	£5.00
Welmoed Merlot 1998	15.5	£5–7
Wide River Pinotage 1999	15.5	£5–7

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Altus Sauvignon Blanc, Paarl 1999	13	£5.00
Jordan Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£7.10
Landema Falls Colombard Chardonnay NV	15	£3.50
Springfield Estate 'Life from Stone' Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5–7
Welmoed Sauvignon Blanc 1999	14	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Amant Tinto de Toro 1999	15.5	£5.00
Casa de la Vina Valdepeñas 1999	14.5	£5.00
Casa Morena, Valdepeñas NV	14	£3.50
Castillo de Almansa Reserva Bodegas Piqueras 1994	15.5	£5.00
Mas Collet Capcanes Tarragona 1998	16.5	£5–7
Mas Donis Capcanes Taragona 1999	16	£5.00
Ochoa Tempranillo Garnacha 1999	15	£5.00
Rioja Crianza Amezola 1996	12	£7–10
Scraping the Barrel Tempranillo, Utiel-Requena NV	14.5	£3.50
Simply Spanish Soft Red NV	9	£2.50
Vina Alarba, Calatayud 1998	15.5	£3.50
Vina Albali Gran Reserva 1993	15	£5–7

SPANISH WHITE

Castillo de Almansa 1998	16	£5.00
Estrella, Moscatel de Valencia NV	16	£5.00
Palacio de Bornos Rueda 1999	13	£5.00
Santa Lucia Viura, Vino de la Tierra Manchuela 1998	14	£3.50
Simply Spanish White NV	12	£2.50

USA RED

Redwood Trail Pinot Noir 1998	13	£5–7
Stonybrook Merlot 1998	16	£5–7
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7

USA WHITE

Stonybrook Chardonnay 1998	16	£5.00

FORTIFIED WINES

Amontillado del Puerto, Lustau	16	£7–10
Banyuls Chapoutier 1996 (50cl)	16	£7–10
Churchills Dry White Port	13	£7–10
Finest Reserve Port, Booths	14.5	£7–10
Fino, Booths	14	£5.00
Henriques & Henriques 5 year Old Madeira	15	£10–13
Lustau Old East India Sherry	17	£7–10
Manzanilla Sherry, Booths	15	£5.00
Medium Amontillado NV, Booths	15.5	£5.00
Niepoort LBV 1994	13	£10–13
Niepoort Ruby Port	14	£7–10
Taylors Quinta de Vargellas Port 1986	15.5	£11–20

SPARKLING WINES

Bollinger Grande Annee 1990	11	£20+
Brossault Rosé Champagne NV	13	£13–20
Bruno Paillard Champagne NV	13	£13–20
Champagne Barone-Fuenté Brut NV	13	£10–13
Champagne Fleurie NV (organic)	10	£13–20
Champagne Gremillet NV	14	£13–20
Chandon Argentina Brut NV	13	£7–10
Chapelle de Cray Brut Rosé 1993 (France)	13	£5.00
Concerto Lambrusco 1998 (Italy)	16	£5–7
Cremant d'Alsace Cuvée Prestige (France)	13	£7–10
Deutz NV (New Zealand)	13	£10–13
Hunter's Miru Miru 1996 (New Zealand)	13	£10–13
Palau Brut Cava NV	10	£5.00
Petillant de Listel, Traditional	12	£2.50
Piper Heidsieck Brut Champagne NV	13	£13–20
Prosecco Zonin NV (Italy)	16	£5.00

BUDGENS

Budgens! Ah yes, Budgens. Isn't that the outfit which discovered in 1999 that it had been trading, unknowingly, in fake Rioja for two years? That's right. Some 300,000 Rioja labels were found in a Spanish police raid on a winery in La Mancha, labels it was said were about to be stuck on bottles of local red destined for Budgens (among other UK retail destinations), and suspicions were aroused because, well, Rioja isn't in La Mancha, is it? Caught red wine-handed is putting it precisely.

Budgens took the wine off its shelves, but its customers, I imagine, didn't bat an eye. Neither did I. The wine, called Don Marino, rated 10 points in the previous two *Superplonk* books and I always felt I was being generous in rating it that highly.

Budgens is an old-fashioned establishment in certain ways, illustrated by the fact that Ms Christine Sandys is Senior Buyer, Wines, Spirits & Tobacco. No other wine buyer I deal with buys fags, though their ancient counterparts, a few decades ago, routinely did. Budgens hired Christine from the Co-op to replace Mr Tony Finnerty and, though we are yet to see the full effects of her regime, the wines that follow amply demonstrate that she is a smart new broom.

Christine has, no doubt about it, joined a growing company now 208 branches strong. Profits leaped by 20% to £12 6 million in 1999. The company launched a home-delivery service from thirty stores, delivering free to customers spending more than £20. It unveiled a new look town centre format designed to compete with similar concepts from Sainsbury's and Tesco, and new MD Martin Hyson announced that the company intended to buy as many convenience sites in the south of England as it could.

It also said that its b2 refits of the old 711 chain would be designed to 'be female-friendly', according to a report in *Supermarketing* magazine.

Well, I said Budgens was old-fashioned, but even I didn't think they'd be saying something that American retail gurus first proclaimed in 1885.

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ARGENTINIAN RED

Etchart Rio de Plata Tempranillo/Malbec 1998	14	£5.00

ARGENTIAN WHITE

Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes 1999	13.5	£3.50
Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes/Chardonnay 1998	13	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	14	£5–7
Wolf Blass Yellow Label Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	£7.10
Wynns Coonawarra Shiraz 1997	16.5	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Hardys Stamp Grenache Shiraz Rosé 1999	13.5	£5.00
Oxford Landing Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5.7
Rawsons Retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999	15	£5.00
Rosemount Estate Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Semillon/Chardonnay 1997	15	£5–7
Rosemount GTR 2000	14	£5–7
White Pointer 2000	13	£5.00

CHILEAN RED

Antu Mapu Merlot 1998	15	£5.00
Antu Mapu Merlot Reserva 1998	14	£5–7
Millaman Cabernet Malbec 1998	13	£5–7
Millaman Merlot 1999	14	£5–7
Stowells of Chelsea Cabernet Merlot NV	14.5	£5.00
Terra Andina Cabernet Merlot 1999	14	£5.00
Terra Andina Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5.00
Vina Gracia Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

Antu Mapu Sauvignon Blanc 1999	12.5	~£5.00
Terra Andina Chardonnay 1998	14	~£5.00
Terra Andina Semillon Chardonnay 1999	14	~£5.00

FRENCH RED

Bourgogne Rouge Vienot 1996	12	£5–7
Château de Malijay Côtes du Rhône 1996	13.5	~£5.00
Corbieres Château Saint-Louis 1997	13	~£5.00
Côtes du Rhône Villages Cuvée Reserve 1997	14	~£5.00
Côtes Marmandais, Beaupuy 1996	13.5	~£5.00
Domaine St Roche VdP de l'Aude NV	12	~£3.50
Gargantua Côtes du Rhône 1997	14	~£5.00
Organic Red VdP du Pays du Gard NV	13	~£3.50
Premium Oaked Cabernet Franc/Syrah VdP d'Oc, Devereux NV	13.5	~£3.50

FRENCH WHITE

Bordeaux Blanc Sec 1998	13	~£3.50
Bordeaux Sauvignon NV, Budgens	13.5	~£5.00
Chablis Delaroche 1999	11	£7–10
Domaine Villeroy-Castellas Sauvignon 1998	14	~£5.00
French Organic White NV	13	~£5.00
James Herrick Chardonnay 1999	16	~£5.00
'L' Grande Cuvée VdP d'Oc 1999	13.5	£5–7
Premium Oaked Chardonnay VdP d'Oc, Devereux NV	14	~£5.00

GERMAN WHITE

Flonheimer Adelberg Auslese 1997	10	~£3.50

GREEK RED

Vin de Crete 1998	12	~£3.50

HUNGARIAN RED

Spice Trail Zweigelt 1997	10	~£5.00

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Spice Trail Irsai Oliver/ Pinot Grigio 1998	13.5	~£5.00

ITALIAN RED

Canaletto Merlot 1999	14.5	~£5.00
Fontella Chianti 1999	13	~£3.50
La Mura Rosso del Salento 1999	14	~£3.50

Merlot del Veneto Rocca NV — 9 — £5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Canaletto Chardonnay 1999 — 13 — £5.00

Marc Xero Chardonnay NV — 15 — £5.00

Pinot Grigio delle Venezie 1999 — 14 — £5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Corbans White Label Dry Red NV — 14 — £5.00

Helderberg Pinotage 1998 — 15 — £5.00

Montana Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1999 — 15 — £3.7

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Corbans Sauvignon Blanc 1999 — 13.5 — £5.00

PORTUGUESE RED

Alta Mesa Red 1999 — 13 — £3.50

Dao Dom Ferraz 1999 — 13 — £5.00

Segada Trincadeira Preta-Castelao 1999 — 14 — £5.00

ROMANIAN RED

Romanian Classic Pinot Noir 1998 — 13.5 — £5.00

Romanian Young Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 — 14 — £5.00

Sahateni Merlot 1998 — 15 — £5.00

ROMANIAN WHITE

Romanian Classic Gewürztraminer 1998 — 11 — £5.00

Romanian Classic Pinot Gris 1999 — 13 — £5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Cape Medium Fruity Red NV, Budgens — 11 — £3.50

Long Mountain Merlot Shiraz 1998 — 13.5 — £5–7

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Cape White NV, Budgens — 11 — £3.50

Clear Mountain Chenin Blanc NV — 13.5 — £3.50

Glen Eden Chardonnay 1998 — 14 — £5.00

Long Mountain Sauvignon Blanc 1999 — 13 — £5.00

Long Mountain Semillon Chardonnay 1999 — 14.5 — £5.00

Stowells of Chelsea Chenin Blanc NV — 13 — £5.00

SPANISH RED

Diego de Almagro Valdepeñas 1996 — 15 — £5.00

Palacio de la Vega Cabernet Sauvignon/ Tempranillo 1996 — 15.5 — £5.00

Palacio de la Vega Crianza 1997	15.5	£5–7
Vina Albali Gran Reserva 1993	15	£5–7

SPANISH WHITE

Castillo de Liria Moscatel de Valencia NV	15.5	£5.00
Vina Albali Rosado Tempranillo 1999	13	£5.00

USA RED

Glen Ellen Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	13	£5–7
Marc Xero Merlot NV	15	£5.00
Sutter Home Merlot 1998	13	£5.00
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7

USA WHITE

Glen Ellen Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7

SPARKLING WINES

Budgens Brut Champagne NV	12	£13–20
Budgens Rosé Champagne NV	10	£13–20
Cava la Vuelta NV	14	£5.00
Hardys Stamp Sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir NV	14	£5–7
Lindauer Brut NV	15	£5–7

CO-OP

This is the only retailer for whom I don a collar and tie, a jacket and smart slacks ('jeans and casual trews not permitted') in order to get my lips on its wines. This is because Mr Paul Bastard, the man who buys the Co-op's wines, likes his bottles to be tasted at a swanky West End club, sited between Berkeley Square and Marco Pierre White's opulent Mirabelle restaurant (£11,000 for a bottle of 1986 burgundy is one entry on the restaurant wine list). Why this insistence on sartorial uniformity? Because the club's fee for renting a large room for the day, a room suitable for entertaining a *Guardian* journalist (who has since removed his tie and jacket upon getting past reception) is incredibly cheap. This approach entirely sums up Mr Bastard's approach to wine: value for money. He is then a chap after my own heart.

The CWS and CRS are rapidly becoming a retailer after more people's hearts. The merger of the two groups' buying strengths will not only result in less confusion but has the professed aim to boost sales by standardising ranges and store design, and by sharing customer information. Following CRS's decision last year to join the CWS-run Co-operative Retail Trading Group, the sixth largest buying force in UK food retailing was created. CWS is testing its 'Market Town' and 'Welcome' formats for roll-out in autumn 2000, and CRS said it might adopt these formats if they were successful.

The Co-op's roots are in fair trading. It supported the Jubilee 2000 movement, which aimed to persuade Western governments about the unacceptability (I would say obscenity) of Third World debt. Badges were offered to customers in stores.

Modern thinking and expansive ideas were, at this time, modestly popping up everywhere at the Co-op. It updated the design of its own brands and expanded the range from 3,200 to 4,200 lines. It acquired the six store Penny's chain in Perthshire, a Costcutter store in Invernesshire and a Londis outlet in Northamptonshire.

It launched a full on-line off-licence offer under the Grape and Grain brand which it also uses in some of its stores. Some 300 wines and 30 whiskies are available from the website.

For the pre-millennium Christmas, the Co-op vowed to continue selling bargain-price Champagne sourced on the grey market. The result of this was that CWS claimed 6.1% of the total UK Champagne market over this period and said that its sales over the festive season had shown a 48% rise.

As the year got under way, CWS put drinks merchandising at the heart of its in store revamp. The redesigned drinks sections will feature stainless steel shelving and much-enhanced drinks ranges. Some 230 market-town stores are supposedly being given this facelift, with the larger stores carrying 350 wines. The move follows the redesign of the drinks sections in the Co op Lateshop outlets, now cosily badged 'Welcome' stores.

The CWS said that its merger with CRS would lead to more consistent drinks ranges throughout the merged operation (according to a report in the *Off Licence News* trade journal). This was followed by a series of regional consultation meetings across the CRS chain which showed major support for a full merger with CWS. The merged group would have 1,000 stores and food sales of around £2.5 billion (total sales £4.7 billion). Analysts say the merger is long overdue, and if it did not go ahead it could jeopardise the future of the Co operative movement a sentiment I heartily and sentimentally endorse. (As a young kid I had the family Co op dividend number indelibly written on my wrist. Nowadays, any mother who sent a five year old child out to buy a cauliflower and a pound of spuds from a Co-op greengrocer would probably be arrested for child abuse or negligence.)

In those days organic produce was an exotic neverheardof (no one realised that all those allotments London had during the war were all organic - who could afford synthetic fertilisers and pesticides?). Now, like most everyone else, the Co-op is on the organic bandwagon, seeking to introduce organic fruit and vegetables to its 342 convenience stores, currently being rebranded under the aforementioned cheery 'Welcome' fascia. This sort of titular cheeriness is admired at this retailer.

In April the North Eastern and Cumbrian Co op rebranded its home-delivery service under the name 'Take It Easy' and announced its extension to two more stores. The scheme is free to customers spending more than fifteen quid.

Do all these new ideas mean that old fashioned value for money gets overshadowed? Decidedly not. In an *Off Licence News* price survey in spring 2000, the Co op and Unwins were identified as the retailers with the lowest drinks prices in the UK.

This was the time the marriage was formally and finally announced: the

CWS and CRS will merge to form a new £4.65 billion operation. In a separate report in *Retail Week* magazine, it was revealed that the merged group intended to take market share from the ailing Somerfield operation. Indeed, the Co-op bought several Somerfield stores, six of which it converted in, apparently, world record time. The half-dozen, all in Scotland, were converted from Somerfields to Co-ops in exactly 36 hours.

Let us hope this kind of pace reaches every corner of the Co-op estate. Mr Bastard is already doing a fine job, but if he had more time and money (i.e. more management hands) he could develop some cracking own-label Co-op wine ranges to compete with the best.

Watch this space? My fingers are crossed. My Co-op divi number, alas, has long disappeared, but not my goodwill towards this retailer and its commercial ethos

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www.co-op.co.uk (online wine and spirit ordering)

ARGENTINIAN RED

Adiseno Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	16	£5.00
Adiseno Tempranillo 1999	15	£5.00
Argentine Malbec 1999, Co-op	15.5	£5.00
Argento Malbec 1999	16.5	£5.00
Balbi Malbec 1999	13.5	£5.00
Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	17	£7–10
First Ever Shiraz 2000	16	£5.00
La Nature Organic Barbera 2000	14.5	£5.00
Lost Pampas Cabernet Malbec 1999, Co-op	14	£5.00
Malbec/Bonarda Mendoza Soft Red Wine 1998	14	£3.50
Mission Peak Argentine Red NV	15.5	£3.50
Weinert Malbec 1994	16	£7–10
Y2K Shiraz 1999	16	£5–7

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Argentine Sauvignon/ Chenin Blanc 1998	15	~£3.50
Balbi Shiraz Rosé 1999	14	~£5.00
Bright Brothers Viognier Reserve 1999	13	£5–7
Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes 1999	13.5	~£5.00
First Ever Chardonnay 2000	13.5	~£5.00
La Nature Organic Torrontes 2000	13.5	~£5.00
Lost Pampas Oaked Chardonnay 1999, Co-op	16	£5.00
Mission Peak Argentine White NV	13.5	~£3.50
Y2K Chardonnay, San Juan 1999	16	~£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Co-op	14	~£5.00
Australian Grenache 1999, Co-op	14	~£5.00
Australian Merlot 1999, Co-op	13.5	~£5.00
Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999	13.5	£5–7
Château Reynella Basket Press Cabernet Merlot 1996	16.5	£10–13
E & E Black Pepper Shiraz 1996	16	£20+
Hardys Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	16	£10–13
Hardys Stamp Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1997	13	£5–7
Leasingham Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec 1996	16.5	£7–10
Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1998	15	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Australian Chardonnay 1999, Co-op	13.5	~£5.00
Bethnay Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7
Hardys Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1998	15	£5–7
Jacaranda Hill Semillon 1999, Co-op	14	£5.00
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	~£5.00
Lindemans Cawarra Chardonnay 1999	13.5	~£5.00
Rosemount GTR 2000	14	£5–7

BULGARIAN RED

Plovdiv Cabernet Sauvignon Rubin 1996	13.5	~£3.50
Pomorie Country Cabernet Merlot 1998	13.5	~£3.50
Sliven Merlot/Pinot Noir NV	13.5	~£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Antares Merlot 1998	16	~£5.00
Casa Lapostolle Merlot Cuvée Alexandre 1997	17.5	£10–13

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon, Co-op	15	£5.00
Chilean Fair Trade Carmenere 2000, Co-op	15.5	£5.00
La Palmeria Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5.00
La Palmeria Merlot Gran Reserva 1998	17	£7–10
Las Lomas Cot Rouge Reserva 1998	15	£5–7
Las Lomas Organic Chilean Red, Vinas Viejas 1998	16	£5–7
Long Slim Cabernet Merlot 1999	16	£5.00
Old Vines Carignan 1999, Co-op	14	£3.00
Terramater Malbec 1999	15.5	£5.00
Vina Gracia Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1999	15.5	£5–7
Vina Gracia Carmenere Reserve Especial 1999	16	£5.00
Vina Gracia Merlot 1998	16	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

Four Rivers Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Long Slim Chardonnay Semillon 1999	14.5	£5.00
Santa Carolina Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00

CYPRIOT RED

Mountain Vines Reserve Cabernet/Maratheftiko 1999, Co-op	16	£5.00

CYPRIOT WHITE

Island Vines White Wine 1998, Co-op	15.5	£3.50
Mountain Vines Semillon 1999, Co-op	13	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Beloup St Chinian 1998	14.5	£5.00
Château Laurencon Bordeaux Superieur 1998	14	£5.00
Château Pierrousselle Bordeaux 1999	14	£5.00
Chevaliere Reserve Grenache Vieilles Vignes 1998	14	£5.00
Claret NV, Co-op	15	£3.50
Corbieres Rouge NV, Co-op	15	£3.50
Corso Merlot 1999	15.5	£5.00
Domaine les Combelles Minervois 1998	13.5	£5.00
Fleurie Pierre Leduc 1998	13.5	£7–10
La Baume Syrah 1997	15.5	£5.00
Louis Mousset Crozes Hermitage 1997	15	£5–7
Oak Aged Claret NV, Co-op	13	£5.00
Rhône Valley Red 1999	14.5	£3.50
Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic)	16.5	£5–7

Vin de Pays d'Oc Cabernet Merlot NV, Co-op	15	£5.00
Vin de Pays d'Oc Cabernet Sauvignon, Co-op	14	£3.50
Vin de Pays d'Oc Merlot NV, Co-op	14.5	£3.50
Vin de Pays d'Oc Syrah, Co-op	14	£3.50
Vin de Pays d'Oc Syrah/ Malbec, Co-op (vegetarian)	14	£5.00

FRENCH WHITE

Alsace Gewürztraminer Producteurs A. Eguisheim 1997	16.5	£5–7
Chablis, Les Vignerons de Chablis 1998	13.5	£7–10
Chardonnay VdP du Jardin Pierre Guery 1998	15	£5.00
Chardonnay-Chenin Vegetarian NV, Co-op	12.5	£5.00
Château Pierrousselle Blanc, Entre Deux Mers 1998	13	£5.00
Domaine des Perruches Vouvray 1998	15.5	£5–7
Fortant VdP d'Oc Sauvignon Blanc 1999	13	£5.00
James Herrick Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Monbazillac Domaine du Haut-Rauly 1995 (half-bottle)	14.5	£5.00
Montagny 1er Cru 1998	13	£7–10
Orchid Vale Chardonnay Grenache Blanc 1999	13.5	£5.00
Rhône Valley White 1999	14	£3.50
Sancerre Domaine Raimbault 1998	13	£7–10
VdP d'Oc Sauvignon Blanc NV, Co-op	14	£5.00
Vin de Pays d'Oc Chardonnay 1999, Co-op	13	£5.00
Vin de Pays d'Oc Chardonnay Chenin Blanc NV, Co-op	14.5	£5.00
Vin de Pays des Cotes de Gascogne, Co-op	14.5	£3.50

GERMAN RED

Devil's Rock Masterpiece Pinot Noir 1999	10	£5.00

GERMAN WHITE

Bend in the River 1998	12.5	£5.00
Bereich Bernkastel 1999, Co-op	10	£3.50
Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett 1996	16	£5–7
Four Rs 1999, Co-op	12	£5.00
Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spatlese 1997	14.5	£5.00
Kendermans Dry Riesling 1998	13.5	£5.00
Kirchheimer Schwarzerde Beerenauslese 1998 (half-bottle)	14	£5.00

HUNGARIAN RED

Hungarian Country Wine NV, Co-op	13	£3.50

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Chapel Hill Irsai Oliver 1998	14	£3.50
Hungarian Chardonnay 1999, Co-op	12	£3.50
Hungarian White NV, Co-op	13.5	£3.50

ITALIAN RED

Barolo, Terre del Barolo 1995	11	£7.10
Barrelaia NV, Co-op	13	£5.00
IGT Merlot NV, Co-op	11	£3.50
Il Padrino Rosso Sicilia 1999	15	£5.00
Melini Chianti 1998	14	£5.00
Puglia Primitivo Sangiovese 1999, Co-op	16	£5.00
Trulli Primitivo del Salento 1998	14.5	£5.00
Valpolicella NV, Co-op	12	£3.50

ITALIAN WHITE

Marc Xero Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Puglia Chardonnay Bombino 1999, Co-op	12	£5.00
Trulli Chardonnay 1998	16	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Terrace View Cabernet Merlot 1997	16	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Explorer's Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Co-op	16	£5–7
Fat Cat Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Big Baga 1999, Co-op	13.5	£5.00
Ramada Vinho Regional Estremadura 1998	13	£3.50
Star Mountain Touriga Nacional 1997	14	£5.00
Terra Boa Portuguese Red 1998	16.5	£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Fiuza Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Ramada Vinho Regional Estremadura 1998	15.5	£3.50

ROMANIAN RED

Romanian Prairie Merlot 1999, Co-op	14.5	£3.50

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Arniston Bay Ruby Cabernet-Merlot 1998	13.5	£3.00

Birdfield Shiraz 1998	14	£5.00
Cape American Oak Pinotage 1999, Co-op	14	£5.00
Cape Indaba Pinotage 1998	13	£5.00
Cape Ruby Cabernet, Oak Aged 1999, Co-op	13.5	£5.00
Elephant Trail Cinsault/ Merlot 2000, Co-op	15	£5.00
Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999	15.5	£5.00
Natural State Cape Soleil Organic Shiraz 1999	15	£5-7
Oak Village Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	£5.00
Pinnacle Merlot 1998	16	£5-7
Railroad Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5.00
Three Worlds Pinotage Shiraz Zinfandel 1999, Co-op	15.5	£5-7
Winds of Change Pinotage/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Cape Chenin Blanc, Oak Aged 1999, Co-op	13	£5.00
Cape French Oak Chardonnay 1999, Co-op	13	£5.00
Cape Indaba Chardonnay 1998	13	£5.00
Elephant Trail Colombard/Chardonnay 2000, Co-op	14	£3.50
Fairview Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5-7
First Release Chardonnay 2000	13.5	£5.00
French Quarter Semillon 1999, Co-op	14.5	£5.00
Goiya Kgeisje Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 2000	15	£5.00
Long Mountain Semillon Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Oak Village Sauvignon Blanc 1999	13	£5.00
Spice Route Chenin Blanc 1998	16	£7-10
Stowells South African Chenin Blanc NV	13	£5.00
Waterside White Colombard Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Berberana Dragon Tempranillo 1998	15	£5.00
Berberana Rioja Reserva 1995	12	£7-10
Berberana Rioja Viura 1997	13.5	£5.00
Chestnut Gully Monastrell-Merlot 1998	15.5	£5.00
Rioja Tinto, Vina Gala NV, Co-op	13.5	£5.00
Tempranillo Oak Aged NV, Co-op	13	£3.50
Tierra Sana Organic Wine 1999, Co-op	17	£5.00

Torres Gran Sangre de Toro Reserva 1996	16	£5–7

SPANISH WHITE

Jaume Serra Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00

USA RED

Blossom Hill Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	11	£5.00
Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998	13.5	£5–7
Fetzer Eagle Peak Merlot 1997	15	£5–7
'Laid Back Ruby' California Ruby Cabernet 1999, Co-op	15	£5.00
Sebastiani Sonoma Cask Old Vine Zinfandel 1998	14.5	£7–10

USA WHITE

Garnet Point Chardonnay-Chenin 1997	15.5	£5.00
'The Big Chill' California Colombard Chardonnay 1999, Co-op	13.5	£5.00

SPARKLING WINES

Australian Quality Sparkling Wine, Co-op	14	£5.00
Blossom Hill NV (USA)	13	£5–7
Brut Sparkling Chardonnay NV, Co-op (France)	13.5	£5.00
Cava Brut NV, Co-op	14	£5.00
De Bracieux Champagne NV	11	£10–13
Jacob's Creek Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV (Australia)	15	£5–7
Moscato Spumante NV, Co-op	11	£5.00
Sparkling Saumur NV, Co-op	13	£5–7
Tempranillo Brut Red NV, Co-op	13.5	£5–7
Y2K Champagne NV	13	£13–20

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

KWIK SAVE

See Somerfield/Kwik Save, page. 390.

ARGENTINIAN RED

Maranon Malbec NV	13	~£3.50

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Dry Red 1999, Somerfield	14.5	~£5.00
Australian Shiraz Cabernet 1999, Somerfield	13	£5.00
Banrock Station Shiraz Mataro 1999	15	£5.00
Hardys Stamp Shiraz Cabernet 1999	14	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Banrock Station Chardonnay 1999	14	~£5.00
Banrock Station Colombard Chardonnay 1999	15	~£5.00
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	~£5.00
Pelican Bay Medium Dry White	14	£3.50
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Semillon/ Chardonnay/Colombard 1999	15	~£5.00

BULGARIAN RED

Boyar Merlot 1999	15	~£3.50
Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999. Somerfield	13.5	~£3.50
Bulgarian Country Red NV, Somerfield	14	~£3.50

BULGARIAN WHITE

Bulgarian Country White 1999, Somerfield	14.5	~£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Vina La Rosa 1999, Somerfield	16.5	~£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

Chilean White 1999, Somerfield	15.5	~£3.50
Vina Morande Chilean Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield	15.5	~£5.00

FRENCH RED

Brouilly Les Celliers de Bellevue 1998	12	£5–7
Cabernet Malbec VdP d'Oc 1997	15.5	–£3.50
Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield	14	£3.50
Claret NV, Somerfield	13.5	–£3.50
Corbieres Rouge Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield	13	£3.50
Fitou Rocher d'Ambree 1998, Somerfield	14.5	–£5.00
Les Oliviers VdT Francais Red NV	12	–£2.50
March Hare VdP d'Oc 1997	15.5	–£5.00
Minervois Château la Reze 1996	16	£3.50
Morgon 1998	12.5	£5.00
Rivers Meet Merlot/ Cabernet, Bordeaux 1997	14	–£5.00
Skylark Hill Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1997	15.5	–£3.50
Skylark Hill Syrah VdP d'Oc 1997	15.5	–£3.50
Skylark Hill Very Special Red VdP d'Oc 1997	14	–£3.50
St Didier VdP du Tarn 1997	15.5	–£3.50
VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardeche Rouge 1999, Somerfield	14	–£3.50

FRENCH WHITE

Blanc de France Vin de Table NV	15.5	–£3.50
Chablis Domaine de Bouchots Cuvée Boissonneuse 1998	12.5	£5–7
Chardonnay en Sol Oxfordien, Bourgogne 1998	14	£5–7
Chardonnay VdP du Jardin de la France 1999	13	–£5.00
Chenin Blanc VdP du Jardin de la France 1997	13.5	–£2.50
James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999	16	–£5.00
Les Marionettes Marsanne VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Les Oliviers du Jardin Vin de Table NV	15.5	–£2.50
VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardeche Blanc 1999, Somerfield	14.5	–£3.50
VdP du Comte du Tolosan, Les Chais Beaucarois 1998	14	–£3.50
Wild Trout VdP d'Oc 1997	15.5	–£5.00

GERMAN WHITE

Hock NV, Somerfield	14.5	£2.50
Niersteiner Spiegelberg 1999, Somerfield	13	–£3.50

GREEK RED

Mavrodaphne of Patras NV	14.5	£5.00

GREEK WHITE

Kourtakis Retsina NV	14	£3.50

HUNGARIAN RED

Chapel Hill Merlot 1997	15.5	£3.50

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Castle Ridge Pinot Grigio, Neszmely 1999	14	£5.00
Hungarian Pinot Grigio, Tolna Region 1998	15	£3.50
Rhine Riesling, Mor Region 1997	14	£3.50

ITALIAN RED

Chianti Classico Conti Serristori 1998, Somerfield	13.5	£5.7
Merlot Venezie 1997	14	£3.50
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Solicella, VdT Umbria NV	15	£3.50
Terra Rossa Sangiovese 1997	16	£3.50
Valpolicella Venier NV	13	£3.50

ITALIAN WHITE

Bianco di Puglia 1998, Somerfield	13.5	£3.50
Bright Brothers Roman Vines Sicilian Barrel-fermented Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Pinot Grigio/ Chardonnay Venezie 1997	15	£3.50
Sicilian White 1999, Somerfield	15.5	£3.50
Soave 1998, Somerfield	14.5	£3.50
Villa Pani Frascati Superiore 1997	13	£3.50
Vino da Tavola Bianco NV, Somerfield	14	£3.50

PORTUGUESE RED

Ramada Red 1999	13	£5.00
Vila Regia 1995	15	£3.50

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Falua 1998	13.5	£3.50
Portuguese White 1999, Somerfield	15	£3.50

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

South African Cape Red 1999, Somerfield	15	£3.50
South African Cinsault Ruby Cabernet 1999, Somerfield	15	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Bodegas Castano Monastrell Merlot 1999	16.5	£5.00
d'Avalos Tempranillo 1997	15	£3.50
Don Darias Red NV	13.5	£5.00
Flamenco Red NV	11	£3.50
Los Molinos Tempranillo, Valdepeñas/Oak Aged 1993	13.5	£3.50
Modernista Tempranillo 1997	13	£3.50
Pergola Tempranillo 1999, Somerfield	13	£5.00
Rioja Crianza 1997, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Teja Tempranillo Cabernet 1997	14.5	£3.50

SPANISH WHITE

Castillo Imperial Blanco NV, Somerfield	13.5	£3.50
Muscatel de Valencia, Somerfield	16	£3.50

USA RED

E & J Gallo Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13	£5.00
E & J Gallo Ruby Cabernet 1997	11	£5.00

USA WHITE

E & J Gallo Chardonnay 1997	10	£5.00

SPARKLING WINES

Asti Spumante NV, Somerfield	14	£5–7
Cava Brut NV, Somerfield	14.5	£5.00
Cava Rosado NV, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Moscato Fizz, Somerfield	14	£2.50
Prince William Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Somerfield	14	£10–13

MAJESTIC

As someone who was once called 'a traitor' on BBC television by a representative of the English wine industry (because I disparaged the majority of English wine and said it was a conceit which would never catch on), I am sensitive where the subject of that strange liquid called English wine is concerned. I am, however, always prepared to accept evidence that will force me to eat my words, and over Christmas 1999 Majestic came up with this humbling dish. It reported that sales of English wine, principally Chapel Down Summerhill Dry (£3.99) and Chapel Down Bacchus (£4.99), had shot up 50% in its stores.

Majestic is increasing, indeed, on many fronts. It opened 12 branches in the past 12 months, planning eventually to end up with some 150 stores 'in the near future'. It also continued to persuade its customers to spend more than the national average on wine. The average price of a bottle of wine sold in Majestic has broken the £5 barrier, according to a report in *Retail Week* magazine, a figure to make a supermarket wine department chief weep with envy.

In May 2000 it launched its new website, allowing customers to buy on line for the first time. It offered a core range of 450 wines. Orders will be referred to local branches and delivery carried out by the retailer's own vans.

Majestic also succeeds, unlike any other retailer, in carrying out daring raids on the Scandinavians. Its forays into Sweden, as a buyer of surplus wine stock, have been brilliantly successful for some years, and the latest one, in July 2000, saw Majestic clear out a state-owned warehouse, due for closure, on the outskirts of Stockholm. Such opportunities come about because of absurd overstocking in Sweden, cripplingly high alcohol taxes, and a sluggish retail market.

Over 400 different wines were picked up, retail value around £2.5 million. Much of it was 1997 vintage Bordeaux, and Majestic claimed that all the 'prices are way below what you would pay at auction or a traditional merchants, some up to 40% cheaper, and they are unrepeatable'. Many of the wines were in small case lots and included famous stuff like Pétrus and Yquem, so not every branch could get every wine I heard of the wines'

arrival immediately, via e-mail, and wanted to taste the less expensive bottles to see if any were suitable for my Saturday column, but the wines were selling faster than 1999 vintage dot.com shares I ended up getting my lips around just four of the '97s, but wasn't impressed with them, the most disappointing being the priciest, Château Lagrange, the Japanese owned St Julien, at £19.99. Any one of several Majestic Côtes du Rhône or Languedoc reds would have been a deeper, more meaningful experience at around a third of the price.

Such wines apart, Majestic employs charming people running no-nonsense stores.

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ARGENTINIAN RED

Carrascal Cavas de Weinert 1996	14	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN RED

Bethany Cabernet Merlot 1998	14	£7–10
Bethany Grenache 1998	13	£5–7
Capel Vale 'CV' Pinot Noir 1998	13	£7–10
Capel Vale 'CV' Shiraz 1998	14.5	£7–10
Capel Vale Howecroft Cabernet 1996	15.5	£13–20
Ironstone Shiraz Grenache, Margaret River and Swan Valley 1996	16.5	£5–7
Kangarilla Road Cabernet, Cabernet Franc, Malbec 1998	14	£7–10
Kangarilla Road Shiraz 1998	15.5	£7–10
Mamre Brook Cabernet Shiraz 1996	16	£5–7
Mirrabrook Shiraz Cabernet 1999	14	–£3.50
Mount Langi Ghiran Shiraz Grenache 1997	13	£7–10

Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5–7
Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz 1996	15.5	£7–10
Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 1996	15.5	£7–10
Penfolds Bin 389 Coonawarra Cabernet Shiraz 1996	16	£10–13
Penfolds Bin 407 Coonawarra Cabernet 1996	15	£10–13
Penfolds Old Vine Syrah Grenache Mourvedre, Barossa 1996	13.5	£7–10
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Bin 35 Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz/Ruby Cabernet 1998	14	£5–7
Pirramimma Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	17	£7–10
Pirramimma Petit Verdot 1997	17	£7–10
Pirramimma Premium Shiraz 1997	15.5	£7–10
Pirramimma Stocks Hill Shiraz 1998	16	£5–7
Rymill Coonawarra Cabernet 1996	12.5	£7–10
Rymill Coonawarra Shiraz 1996	12	£7–10
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14	£5–7
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Woodstock McLaren Vale Grenache 1997	13	£7–10
Woodstock 'The Stocks' McLaren Shiraz 1996	10	£10–13

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Bethany Riesling 1998	16.5	£5–7
Bethany Semillon Riesling Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7
Capel Vale Riesling 1999	15	£7–10
Capel Vale Verdelho 1999	16	£7–10
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1998	16	£5.00
Mamre Brook Chardonnay 1997	14	£5–7
Mirrabrook Chardonnay 1999	15	£3.50
Noble Road Verdelho 1998	14.5	£5–7
Oxford Landing Limited Release Viognier 1999	17	£5–7
Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£5.00
Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Pirramimma Chardonnay 1997	17	£5–7
Pirramimma Late Harvest Riesling 1998 (half-bottle)	15	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Diamond Semillon 1997	16	£5–7
Rosemount GTR 1998	16	£5–7

Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Wynns Coonawarra Riesling 1998	16	£5.00
Yalumba Griffith-Barossa Botrytis Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 1997 (half-bottle)	16	£7–10
Yalumba Growers Chardonnay 1999	17	£5–7

CHILEAN RED

Luis Felipe Edwards Pupilla Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14	£5.00
Montes Alpha Merlot 1997	14	£7–10
Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1997	16	£5–7
Santa Rita Triple C 1997	17	£10–13
Valdivieso Barrel Selection Malbec 1999	16	£5.7
Valdivieso Barrel Selection Merlot 1998	17	£5–7
Vistasur Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15.5	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

Chardonnay Reserve Cono Sur 1998	16.5	£5.7
Luis Felipe Edwards Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Santa Rita Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 1999	16	£5.00
Santa Rita Dona Paula Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 1998	14	£5.00
Vistasur Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Beaune 1er Cru Les Chauacheaux 1997	12	£13–20
Beaune Louis Latour 1997	11	£7–10
Beaune-Epenotes 1979	10	£20+
Bois de Lamothe Cabernet Franc, Cotes de Duras 1997	16	£3.50
Bott-Geyl Pinot Noir Beblenheim 1997	15.5	£7.10
Bourgeuil La Vernelle 1997	16	£5.00
Bouton d'Or Cairanne, Côtes du Rhône Villages 1998	14	£5.00
Calvet Reserve Claret 1998	14.5	£5–7
Cave de Ribeauville Pinot Noir 1998	14	£5–7
Chambolle-Musigny Jaffelin 1996	10	£10–13
Château de Bosc Côtes du Rhône 1997	11	£5–7
Château de Candale, Haut Medoc 1996	14	£10–13
Château de Gaudou Cuvée Tradition Cahors 1998	15.5	£5.00

Château de Haute Serre Cahors 1989	13	£7–10
Château de Nardon 1998	14	£5–7
Château de Sales, Pomerol 1996	13.5	£20+
Château Flauguergues Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	17.5	£5–7
Château Guiot Costieres de Nimes 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Château Haut Mazieres, Bordeaux 1997	14	£5–7
Château l'Abbaye de St Ferme Bordeaux Superieur 1998	15.5	£5–7
Château Lamartine, Cotes de Castillon 1997	15	£5–7
Château Ludon Pomies Agassac, Bordeaux 1997	12	£10–13
Château Meaume Bordeaux Superieur 1997	16	£5–7
Château Morin, St Estephe 1997	16.5	£7–10
Château Tour Saint Paul, Bordeaux Superieur 1997	13	£5–7
Châteauneuf-du-Pape Domaine Cailloux 1997	13	£10–13
Châteauneuf-du-Pape Domaine Pegau 1997	14.5	£13–20
Chinon les Garous, Couly-Dutheil 1997	16	£5–7
Claret Cuvée 090 1998	14	£5.00
Claret Lot 278 1998	14	–£5.00
Corbieres Domaine Madelon 1999	14	–£5.00
Corton Grancey Grand Cru 1995	12.5	£20+
Coteaux de Tricastin Domaine Saint Remy 1997	15	–£5.00
Côtes de Nuits Villages Louis Latour 1996	10	£7–10
Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1997	14	£5–7
Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998	16	£7–10
Côtes du Rhône Les Chevaliers aux Lys d'Or 1998	13	–£3.50
Côtes du Ventoux Vidal-Fleury 1998	14	–£5.00
Crozes-Hermitage Cave Tain l'Hermitage 1998	14	£5–7
Domaine de l'Ile St-Pierre Cabernet Franc 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Domaine de la Closerie St Nicholas de Bourgueil 1997	13	£5–7
Domaine de Rodes Grenache VdP d'Oc 1998	15	–£5.00
Domaine de Rodes Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Domaine des Bois du Garn Côtes du Vivarais 1998	16	–£5.00
Fixin Jaffelin 1996	12	£7–10
Gigondas Guigal 1997	16.5	£10–13
Givry 1er Cru Steinmaier 1998	15	£7–10
Givry Louis Latour 1997	13	£7–10

Grenache/Cabernet VdP de l'Ardeche 1998	16	£3.50
Hautes Côtes de Beaune Cave Co-op 1997	13.5	£5–7
La Fauve Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998	15	£5.00
La Fauve Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998	15.5	£5.00
La Ramillade Gigondas 1998	15	£7–10
Lirac Domaine de la Rocaliere 1997	16	£5–7
Macon St Gengoux 1998	14	£5.00
Madiran Meinjarre Alain Brumont 1997	15	£5–7
Mas de Bressades Cabernet Syrah VdP du Gard 1998	17	£5–7
Mas de Guiot Cabernet Syrah VdP du Gard 1998	17.5	£5–7
Merlot VdP de la Haute Vallee de l'Aude 1998	14	£3.50
Morgon Jean Descombes 1998	13	£7–10
Pernand-Vergelesses Jaffelin 1996	12.5	£7–10
Regnie Vallieres 1998	14	£5.00
Sancerre Rouge Les Belles Dames Vacheron 1997	14.5	£13–20
Sancerre Rouge Vacheron 1998	15.5	£7–10
Syrah Collines Rhodaniennes, Co-op de Tain Hermitage 1998	13.5	£5.00
Syrah VdP du Cave Tain l'Hermitage 1998	13	£5.00
Vacqueyras Beaumes de Venise 1999	16.5	£5–7

FRENCH WHITE

Bois de Lamothe Sauvignon Blanc, VdP du Lot et Garonne 1997	15	£3.50
Bott-Geyl Gewürztraminer Grand Cru Sonnenglanz 1998	17.5	£10–13
Bott-Geyl Riesling Burgreben de Zellenberg 1997	14.5	£7–10
Bott-Geyl Riesling Grafenreben de Zellenberg 1997	15	£7–10
Bott-Geyl Tokay Pinot Gris 1998	15	£7.10
Bott-Geyl Tokay Pinot Gris Sonnenglanz Vendages Tardives 1998	14	£13–20
Cave de Ribeauville Gewürztraminer 1998	16	£5.7
Cave de Ribeauville Tokay Pinot Gris 1998	15	£5.7
Chablis 1er Cru Côte de Lechet La Chablisienne 1998	12	£10–13
Chablis Domaine Marguerite Carillon 1998	15.5	£5.00
Chablis Domaine Vocoret 1998	13.5	£7.10
Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos 1998	10	£13–20
Chardonnay Jean Belmont VdP du Jardin de la France 1999	15	£5.00

Chassagne-Montrachet Fontaine-Gagnard 1er Cru La Maltroie 1997	10	£20+
Château du Sours Rosé 1999	15	£5–7
Château Haut Mazieres Blanc, Bordeaux 1997	16	£5–7
Château Meaume Rosé 1999	14	£5–7
Chenin Blanc VdP du Jardin de la France, Remy Pannier NV	14.5	–£3.50
Chinon Rosé Couly-Dutheil 1998	13	£5–7
Condrieu Guigal 1998	15.5	£13–20
Corton-Charlemagne, Bonneau du Martray 1996	10	£20+
Côtes du Rhône Rosé Guigal 1997	14	£5–7
Cuvée Apolline Tokay Pinot Gris 1997	13	£10–13
Domaine de Raissac CVM Barrique 1999	15	–£5.00
Domaine de Raissac Viognier 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Domaine des Fontanelles Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£5.00
Domaine Le Puts Blanc Michel Bordes 1999	16	–£3.50
Gewurztraminer, Haegelin 1998	14.5	£7–10
Gewürztraminer Paul Zinck 1999	13.5	£7–10
Givry Blanc Louis Latour 1996	10	£7–10
Grand Ardeche Chardonnay Louis Latour 1998	15	£5–7
Le Fauve Chasan 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Le Fauve Marsanne 1999	16	–£5.00
Le Fauve Rosé de Syrah 1999	14.5	–£5.00
Les Fontanelles Viognier Foncalieu 1999	16	£5.00
Les Grands Clochers Chardonnay 1999	14.5	£5–7
Moulin Touchais, Coteaux du Layon 1986	16	£7–10
Muscadet Cuvée du Homard 1998	14	–£3.50
Muscadet Hommard 1998	13.5	–£3.50
Muscadet sur Lie Château la Touche 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Muscat Riquewihr, Bott-Geyl 1997	15	£7–10
Pinot Blanc Haegelin 1998	13.5	£5–7
Quincy JC Bourguat 1999	15	£5–7
Reuilly Beurdin 1999	14	£5–7
Riesling Bollenberg, Haegelin 1998	13	£5–7
Sancerre La Chaudillonne Fournier 1997	10	£7–10
Sancerre Rosé Vacheron 1999	10	£7–10
Sauvignon Lot 279, Bordeaux 1998	13	–£5.00
Sauvignon Touraine Delauney 1999	12	–£5.00
Sylvaner, Paul Zinck 1998	14.5	–£5.00

Tokay Pinot Gris, Haegelin 1998	13.5	£7–10
Vivian Ducourneau VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Vouvray Tris de Nobles Grain, Domaine Bourillon Dorleans 1995 (50cl)	16	£10–13

GERMAN WHITE

Avelsbacher Hammerstein Riesling QbA 1992	16.5	–£5.00
Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett, Jacobus 1994	13.5	–£5.00
Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett Thanisch Muller-Burggrael 1998	13	£7–10
Domdechant Werner Riesling Spatlese Halbtrocken 1992	14.5	£5.00
Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spatlese 1994	16.5	£5–7
JL Wolf Forster Stiff Riesling Spatlese 1996	14	£5–7
Kaseler Kehrnagel Riesling Kabinett Bert Simon 1990	14	–£5.00
Riesling QbA Friedrich-Wilhelm-Gymnasium 1991	14	£5.00
Riesling Ruppertsberger 1997	13.5	–£5.00
Serriger Vogelsang Riesling Auslese (2nd Barrel) 1989	16.5	£5–7
Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett, Jacobus 1992	16	–£5.00
Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese, Hauth-Kerpen 1998	15	£5–7

ITALIAN RED

Aglianico del Vulture 1997	18	£7–10
Amarone Valpolicella Tedeschi 1996	18	£10–13
Barbera d'Asti Ca'Bianca 1997	13.5	£5–7
Centine Toscanna, Banfi 1997	16	£5–7
Chianti Il Tasso 1998	14	–£5.00
Chianti Rufina Basciano 1997	15.5	£5–7
Colli di Sasso Banfi 1998	14	–£5.00
Conero Conti Cortesi 1997	14.5	£5–7
Dogajolo Toscana 1998	16	£5–7
Dolcetto d'Alba de Forville 1998	16	£5–7
Merlot del Veneto Marchesini 1998	14.5	–£3.50
Merloti Marche Marchesini 1999	10	–£3.50
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Barone Cornacchia 1998	11	–£5.00

Primitivo del Salento Antonini 1998	16	£5–7
Primitivo del Salento Sigillo Primo 1998	16	£5–7
Recioto Tedeschi 1996 (50cl)	15	£5–7
Rosso di Sicilia La Toricella 1998	15	£3.50
Salice del Salento Riserva 1997	15.5	£5–7
Sangiovese Marchesini 1998	13.5	£3.50
Sassaiolo Rosso Piceno 1997	14.5	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico, Santepietre 1998	12	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico Superiore 1996	12	£7.10
Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 1996	14.5	£5–7

ITALIAN WHITE

Bianco di Sicilia La Toricella 1998	15	£3.50
Ca'Visco Soave Classico Superiore Coffele 1998	16	£5–7
Castello di Tassarolo Gavi 1998	15.5	£7–10
Chardonnay di Puglia, Pasqua NV	14.5	£3.50
Chardonnay Pinot Grigio Pasqua 1999	13.5	£5.00
Frascati Superiore, Selciatella 1998	15.5	£5.00
Garganega Garda DOC	14.5	£5.00
Vigne Alte Fratelli Zeni 1999		
Late Picked Gavi di Gavi Villa Lanata 1999	14	£7–10
Monte Tenda Vigneto Soave Classico Tedeschi 1998	13	£5.00
Orvieto Classico Secco Vigneto Mortaro 1999	15.5	£5.00
Piemonte Chardonnay de Forville 1998	15.5	£5–7
Pinot Grigio Alois Lageder 1998	16	£7.10
Pinot Grigio San Angelo Vineyard, Banfi 1999	10	£5–7
Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Coste del Molino 1999	16	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£7–10
Marlborough Gold Chardonnay 1998	13	£5–7
Marlborough Gold Sauvignon 1999	14.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Sauvignon 1999	16.5	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Contes de Cima Vinho Regional Alentejano 1997	14	£7–10
Duas Quintas 1997	16	£5–7

Tuella Douro Tinto 1997	15.5	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Drosty-Hof Merlot 1998	16	£5–7
Fairview Merlot 1998	16.5	£5–7
Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999	15.5	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

De Wetshof Estate 'Lesca' Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5–7
Franschoek Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 1998	12	£5.00
Kumala Semillon Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Artadi Vinas de Gain Rioja 1997	15	£7–10
Arva Vitis Tempranillo 1998	15.5	£5.00
Berberana Dragon Tempranillo 1998	15	£5.00
Costers del Gravet Celler de Capcanes 1998	17	£7–10
Finca Lasendal, Celler de Capcanes 1999	15.5	£5.00
'G' Dehesa Gago Telmo Rodriguez 1998	16	£5–7
Marques de Grinon Rioja 1997	15	£5–7
Marques de Murietta Rioja Reserva 1995	14	£7–10
Mas Collet Celler de Capcanes 1998	16.5	£5–7
Muga Rioja Reserva 1995	13	£7–10
Ochoa Tempranillo Garnache Navarra 1998	15	£5.00
Vina Armantes Garnacha 1999	15	£5.00
Vina El Salado Extremadura 1998	15	£5.00

SPANISH WHITE

Albarino Martin Codax Rias Maixas 1999	13.5	£5–7
Rueda Blanco, Vinos Sanz 1999	15	£5.00
Vionta Albarino 1999	13	£7–10

USA RED

Beringer Appellation Zinfandel 1996	14	£7–10
Beringer Valdeguie 1998	15	£5–7
Firestone Old Vine Cucmunga Zinfandel 1997	17	£7–10
Foxen Pinot Noir Santa Maria 1997	14	£13–20
Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1996	15.5	£5–7
Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1997	15	£5–7
Ironstone Vineyards Merlot 1997	16	£5–7
Kautz-Ironstone Shiraz 1997	16	£5–7
Prosperity Red NV	16	£5.00

USA WHITE

Beringer Californian Sauvignon Blanc 1997	15.5	£5–7
Beringer Californian Zinfandel Blush 1998	6	£5–7
Beringer Napa Valley Fume Blanc 1998	15	£7–10
Essencia Orange Muscat 1996 (half-bottle)	16	£5–7
Fetzer Barrel Select Chardonnay 1997	15	£7–10
Fetzer Viognier 1999	15	£7–10
Foxen Bien Nacido Vineyard Chardonnay 1996	14	£13–20
Foxen Tinaquaic Vineyard Chardonnay 1996	13.5	£13–20
Ironstone Chardonnay 1998	10	£5–7
Ironstone Semillon Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7
Kautz-Ironstone Chardonnay 1998	13.5	£5–7
Prosperity White NV	15	£5.00

FORTIFIED WINES

Amontillado Seco Napoleon, Hidalgo	16	£7–10
Pedro Ximenez Viejo Napoleon, Hidalgo	15	£7–10
Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita 1986	17	£13–20

SPARKLING WINES

Ayala Champagne NV	15	£13–20
Ayala Champagne Rosé NV	14	£13–20
Bouvet Ladubay Saumur NV	10	£7–10
Cava Verano, Freixenet NV	15.5	£5.00
Conde de Caralt Cava Brut NV	16.5	£5–7
De Telmont Grande Reserve Champagne NV	14.5	£13–20
Freixenet Cuvée DS 1996	16.5	£10–13
Gloria Ferrer Royal Cuvée 1991	13	£13–20
Jacquart Brut Mosaique Champagne NV	12	£13–20
Jacquart Champagne 1992	12	£20+
Lamberhurst Brut NV (England)	8	£7–10
Langlois Cremant de Loire NV (France)	15	£7–10
Langlois Cremant de Loire Rosé NV (France)	16	£7–10
Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand)	16	£7–10
Oeil de Perdrix Champagne NV	16	£13–20
Oeil de Perdrix NV	14	£13–20
Taittinger Champagne Brut NV	12	£20+
Yellowglen Pinot Noir Chardonnay NV (Australia)	13.5	£7–10

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

MARKS & SPENCER

Considerable distraction was endured while tasting El Padruell 1998, a monumentally cheeky Spanish red from Señor Jaume Serra in Penedès, since I tasted it in a mausoleum cum-art gallery. This unique establishment is the new tasting arena on the top floor of Marks & Spencer's head office in Baker Street in London's West End. The area was once the directors' executive suite, where exhausted retail moguls could gather their wits in fat armchairs, take in the chintz-curtain framed views, and regard with awe the abundance of framed daubs on the walls (taking exceptional encouragement, no doubt, from Terence Cuneo's cutsie beach scene and Lowry's stick insect townsfolk). Marks & Spencer, however, doesn't have any armchaired moguls any more; they've passed away in all the 'reorganis ations' of the recent past. But the memoria remain; as does the space which has been given to the company's wine buyers to use.

The bad news about El Padruell is that M&S bought it as a one-off 'special parcel' and so there is not likely to be much, if anything, left on any shelf. Nevertheless, I discovered many other interesting things at that tasting, Lowry's emaciated populace notwithstanding, as the wines which follow show.

I would particularly point to the following: Marisa 1999 (16 points, £4.99) from Spain, with its baked, savoury fruit with a tobacco undertone and a lovely warmth to the texture. Sierra Los Andes Merlot Cabernet 1999 (16 points, £4 99) from Chile, which has a curious strawberry fool aroma but don't let this kid you, for this is serious stuff with piles of flavour courtesy of resoundingly rich fruit of vivacity and pace. La Tour du Prevot Côtes du Ventoux 1999 (16 points, £5.99) is what terrific under a fiver French country reds are all about, deep, herby, rich, warm, drinkable, unpretentious, food-friendly, full of character, and, less typical of the handsomest of its kind, Sangiovese di Puglia 1999 (15 5 points, £3.99), which, with its tenacious tannins, is so much more lip smackingly savoury and entertaining than many Chiantis using the same Sangiovese grape. Barbera Piemonte 1998 (16 points, £4.49), with its plump cherry fruit, is more typical of its kind, but it does have a wonderful vigour and flushed with youth freshness on the finish that is not entirely classic. And lastly in this mini-peek at the M&S

range there is Rock Ridge Pinotage 1999 (16.5 points, £4.99), from the Cape, a wine of brilliant spicy warmth and wit. The tobacco and rubber, the smoke and the basket of leathery fruit all the usual Pinotage pleasures hanging together extremely sensuously.

Chris Murphy (who's had to endure a horrible year as a Leeds supporter) runs the wine department with Jane Masters, who's actually made wine (and so knows all about horrible years too).

On the business front, M&S announced the expansion of its flagship French store on the Boulevard Haussmann in Paris even though the company had just put a halt to its expansion in Europe and the Far East. In the UK, it was said M&S planned to 'rethink' food stores and redesign and rebrand, whatever that means, 40 neighbourhood food stores. In June 2000 the store announced the radical idea that it was extending its refund policy to food, so that consumers can return food they haven't enjoyed. The move was expected to cost the retailer about £1 million a year because such returned goods can obviously not be resold. Personally, I expect it to cost a lot more because there are a lot of shifty blighters out there who will cheerfully cough up £30 for a load of Indian dishes, say, scoff half, and then return the remainder as unsatisfactory and demand a refund.

No such returns for that amiable Greenbury chap, who was chairman. He retired last year. Brian Baldock took over as chairman until a 'permanent replacement can be found'. Mr Greenbury had been with M&S for 46 years. Mr Baldock said that he would not be staying on permanently but as attempts to find a replacement, at that time, seemed deadlocked it appeared he might be there for some time, but a certain Luc Vandevelde finally landed the job. (More of whom in a moment.)

There was a launch in 1999 of M&S's new wine shop format (called Wine Shop 2000), which was basically just a rebranding and merchandising initiative. Wines were merchandised under twelve different taste styles, colour coded by country There was also a display of the current top ten best-sellers, and tastings were held at zinc counters at prearranged times (the zinc counter was particularly stressed – as no doubt were the tasters behind it) I've visited a dozen M&S stores over the past year and I've yet to come across a single zinc counter but I don't doubt they exist or did exist.

Some months later I learned that the moves to roll out M&S's Wine Shop 2000 format had stalled. It had been feebly extended to seven outlets from its initial two pilot versions (in Oxford and Tolworth). It was now being incorporated into a wider rebranding scheme for its combined food and wine shelves (where the food has the lion's share, of course).

M&S's summer sales flagged in 1999. Like for like sales were rumoured to be down 12% for clothing, and rumours of another profits warning were rife It was revealed in *The Times* that M&S was looking to recruit a marketing director from outside the company to succeed James Benfield. Mr Benfield, in the job just six months, had been the company's first marketing director and been with the company 30 years. Alan McWalter was eventually recruited as marketing director from Kingfisher

In 1999 M&S reported a 12.9% drop in sales over April, May and June, the largest in its 115 year history. But it wasn't taking these reverses lying down. It opened food and lingerie concessions in stores overseas and offered cash incentives to staff to promote better customer service. Then *The Times* revealed that M&S was planning to sell clothes brands other than St Michael, while the *Independent on Sunday* reported that in a survey by Western International Media M&S was still the retailer most trusted by consumers

But only in the UK. In the wider landscapes of Europe, M&S closed six of its forty-two Continental European outlets at a cost of three hundred jobs but resulting in a £10 million annual saving Rumours were rife at this time about thirty top staff cuts These were dismissed as 'pure speculation'. *The Times* reported that M&S was considering a mass property sell-off.

Nothing daunted, M&S expanded its home shopping format, increasing the number of catalogues distributed from 21 million to nearly 50 million and offering 3,000 lines on the Internet. It was reported in *Retail Week* magazine to be considering the launch of its own credit card. This followed the decision, long, long overdue, to accept credit cards (a move which finally took effect in April 2000). M&S currently has 5 million chargecard holders and these moves surely enhance its chances to acquire many more.

M&S was, however, according to the *Guardian*, still the fifth most profitable retailer in the UK - so what was it doing wrong? Well, it wasn't sucking up to its UK suppliers. *The Times* carried the doleful news that M&S, once the undisputed champion of British-made merchandise, will eventually import up to 75% of the garments it sells Parallel to this, M&S was seeking a summary court judgment to dismiss a £53 million lawsuit from clothing manufacturer, and long time and once trusted British supplier, William Baird. The basis of the M&S case was that there was no formal contract. Later, the GMB Union urged M&S to pay £35 million to textile workers who faced unemployment as a result of the firm's decision to source clothes from abroad.

Hard on the heels of this report, the *Sunday Telegraph* wrote that M&S had appointed a 'change tsar' to oversee the retailer's battles to adapt itself

to today's market. A certain Nigel Robertson has 'a licence to challenge and sanction at all levels', just like the tsars of old. The *Sunday Telegraph* also reported in February that M&S was to adapt its ranges to suit the needs of local markets and consumers.

Finally, in February, Mr Luc Vandevelde was named as the new M&S chairman (to take up the post in March). *Retail Week* magazine reported that the chairman's office was being redecorated and refurbished in his honour. He was also getting a £2.2 million golden hello. The trade paper observed that he shared his name with the golfer who famously snatched defeat from the jaws of victory at last year's Open in the most bizarre and farcical of circumstances. Analysts, at this time, speculated that chief executive Peter Salsbury's position was now under threat.

Matters now began to gather pace and heat. M&S launched its new Autograph designer range, which did indeed bear designers' names rather than the legendary St Michael, and it was reported in the *Sun*, of all places, that M&S was to drop the legendary label from all its own-label clothing and simply use the Marks & Spencer label. According to the *Mail on Sunday*, M&S asked 450 senior managers at its head office to reapply for their jobs as part of a strategy to split the group into seven units.

In spring 2000 M&S appointed Ms Cheri Lofland as their first ever director of communications. This fact, allied to the appointment of the store's first-ever outside marketing director (the Mr McWalter referred to above), tells you more about the reasons for the state which M&S got itself into than any amount of statistics and columns of sagging sales figures

Last I heard, M&S was going to open its first outlet in Croatia. Since I don't have any plans to visit this country, may I ask any reader who does to see if s(he) finds any zinc counters in the M&S in Zagreb?

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ARGENTINIAN RED

Rio Santos Bonarda Barbera 1999	13.5	£5.00
Rio Santos Cabernet Syrah 1999	13.5	£5.00
Rio Santos Malbec 1999	14	£5.00

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Rio Santos Torrontes 1999	13.5	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Shiraz 1999	15	£5-7
Fusion Shiraz 1998	16	£5-7
HoneyTree Grenache Shiraz 1999	13	£5-7
HoneyTree Reserve Pinot Noir 1998	13	£7-10
HoneyTree Shiraz Cabernet 1999	15.5	£5-7
HoneyTree Shiraz Reserve 1998	14	£7-10
Shiraz Ruby Cabernet Merlot Bin 312 1999	12.5	£5.00
South East Australian Cabernet 1999	14	£5.00
South East Australian Merlot 1999	13.5	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Fusion Riesling 1999	15	£5.00
HoneyTree Gewürztraminer Riesling 1999	12	£5-7
HoneyTree Semillon Chardonnay 1999	15	£5-7
Hunter Valley Chardonnay Bin 109 1999	14.5	£5.00
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00
Semillon Bin 381 1999	13	£5.00
South East Australian Medium Dry 1999	13	£5.00
South Eastern Australian Chardonnay 1999	15	£5.00
South Eastern Australian Riesling 1999	12	£5.00
Verdelho 1999	12	£5.00

CHILEAN RED

Casa Leona Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	16.5	£5.00
Casa Leona Merlot 1999	16	£5-7
Sierra Los Andes Merlot Cabernet 1999	16	£5-7
Sierra Los Andes Merlot Cabernet Reserve 1998	15	£5-7

CHILEAN WHITE

Alta Mira Chilean White 1999	15	£5.00
Casa Leona Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00
Casa Leona Merlot/ Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2000	14	£5.00
Sierra Los Andes Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00

Sierra Los Andes Chardonnay Reserve 1999	16	£5–7
Sierra Los Andes Gewürztraminer 1999	16	£5–7

FRENCH RED

Abbaye de Tholomies Minervois 1996	16.5	£5–7
Burgundy Pinot Noir 1998	12	£7–10
Château de Sauvanes Faugeres 1997	15.5	£5–7
Château de Surville Costieres de Nimes 1998	16	£5–7
Château des Lanes, Corbieres 1998	16	£5–7
Château Planezes, Cotes du Roussillon Villages 1998	16.5	£5–7
Côtes du Parc, Coteaux du Languedoc 1999 (organic)	15.5	£5–7
Devois des Agneaux Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	15.5	£7–10
Domaine St Pierre VdP de l'Herault 1999	11	£3.50
Gold Label Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998	15	£5.00
Gold Label Reserve Barrel Aged Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	£5–7
Gold Label Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999	16	£5.00
House Red Wine, VdP du Comte Tolosan 1999	12	£3.50
La Tour du Prevot Côtes de Ventoux 1999	16	£5.00
Margaux 1997	13.5	£10–13
Merlot Cave de Rauzan 1998	13.5	£5.00
Oak Aged Bordeaux 1997	13	£5–7

FRENCH WHITE

Bordeaux Sauvignon 1999	13.5	£5.00
Chablis 1997	13.5	£7–10
Chablis Grand Cru Grenouille 1994	12	£13–20
Chablis Premier Cru 1996	13	£10–13
Château Les Charmes de Saint-Mayme, Monbazillac 1995	16	£7–10
Côtes de Provence 1999 (rosé)	11	£5.00
Domaine de la Pouvraie Vouvray 1999	14	£3.00
Gold Label Chardonnay Reserve 1998	15.5	£5–7
Gold Label Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999	15	£5.00
Gold Label Sauvignon Blanc VdP d'Oc 1999	14	£5.00
Gold Label Viognier 1999	14	£5.00
Les Ruetttes Sancerre 1999	15.5	£7–10
Macon Villages 1999	15.5	£5–7
Pouilly Fume 1999	16	£7–10

Rivesaltes Ambre Hors d'Age 25 Year	15.5	£7–10
Rosé de Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999	14	£5.00
VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999	14	£3.50
Vin de Pays du Gers 1999	14	£3.50

GERMAN WHITE

Summer Spring Riesling 1999	12	£5.00

ITALIAN RED

Amarone Classico della Valpolicella 1995	15.5	£10–13
Barbera Piemonte 1998	16	£5.00
Barolo 1996	13.5	£13–20
Canfera 1997	14.5	£7–10
Chianti Single Estate 1998	13	£5.00
Italian Table Red Wine NV (1 litre)	12	£3.50
Reggiano Rosso Single Estate 1999	10	£5.00
Rosso di Puglia 1998	13	£3.50
Rosso Toscano 1997	16	£5–7
Sangiovese di Puglia 1999	15.5	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico Single Estate 1999	13	£5.00
Villa Cafagio Chianti Classico 1998	13.5	£7–10
Vino Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1997	13.5	£7–10
Vino Nobile di Montepulciano 1995	13.5	£7–10

ITALIAN WHITE

Frascati Superiore 1999	12	£5.00
Orvieto Single Estate 1999	13.5	£5.00
Pinot Grigio/Garganega 1999	12	£5.00
Soave Superiore 1999	15.5	£5.00
Villa Masera Organic Wine 1999	11	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Kaituna Hills Cabernet Merlot 1998	13	£5–7
Kaituna Hills Reserve Cabernet Merlot 1998	15.5	£7–10

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Kaituna Blue Sauvignon Semillon 1999	11	£5.00
Kaituna Hills Chardonnay 1999	15	£5–7
Kaituna Hills Reserve Chardonnay 1999	14.5	£7–10
Kaituna Hills Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 1999	14	£7–10
Kaituna Hills Sauvignon Blanc 1999	12.5	£5–7

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Bin 121 Merlot Ruby Cabernet 1998	15.5	£5.00
Cape Country Cinsault/ Ruby Cabernet 1999	13.5	£5.00

Rock Ridge Pinotage 1999	16.5	£5.00
Rockridge Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Cape Country Chenin Blanc 2000	14.5	£5.00
Cape Country Colombard 2000	13.5	£5.00
Perdeberg Sauvignon Blanc 2000	14	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Campo Ran 1999	14	£5.00
Las Falleras 1999	14	£3.50
Marisa 1999	16	£5.00
Rioja Roseral 1996	13.5	£5–7
Sotelo 1996	15.5	£5–7

SPANISH WHITE

Moscatel de Valencia 1999	14.5	£5.00

USA RED

Clear Lake Cabernet Franc 1999	15	£5.00
Freedom Ridge Shiraz 1999	15	£5–7
Live Oak Road Zinfandel 1999	15	£7.10
Zamora Zinfandel 1998	14	£5–7

USA WHITE

Clear Lake Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5.00
Clear Lake Rosé 1999	13	£5.00
Dunnigan Lane Fume Blanc 1999	13.5	£5–7
Gardeners Grove Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5–7

FORTIFIED WINES

Pale Dry Fino Sherry	16	£5.00
Vintage Character Port	15	£5–7

SPARKLING WINES

Veuve Truffeau Colombard/Chardonnay Brut	13.5	£5.00
Bluff Hill Sparkling Wine (New Zealand)	13	£5–7
Cava Brut NV (Spain)	13.5	£5–7
Cava Medium Dry NV (Spain)	12	£5–7
Champagne de St Gall Blanc de Blancs NV	15	£13–20
Champagne de St Gall Brut NV	13.5	£13–20
Champagne Desroches NV	13.5	£13–20
Champagne Oudinot Grand Cru 1993	13	£13–20
Cuvee Orpale Grand Cru 1990	12	£20+
Gold Label Sparkling Chardonnay NV	16	£5–7

MARKS & SPENCER

Oudinot Brut Champagne	13%	£10–13
Vintage Cava 1994	15%	£7–10

MORRISONS

Stuart Purdie, the sturdy, stoical, sole wine buyer of this chain, is the only major British supermarket wine professional who has not visited Australia What does this tell us about Morrisons? That they don't like unnecessary expense and to contemplate a staff member taking twenty four hours to reach a vineyard, twenty-fours hours during which he would be doing nothing more profitable than twiddling his thumbs and swigging free Champagne on an aeroplane, sends shivers up the management's collective spine. Pennies count at Morrisons But so does freshness. Morrisons are a family centred business and a multi-millionaire knight called Morrison will still pitch up at a branch and prowl the fresh fruit counters to see if the pears are up to scratch.

Eleven years ago, when I started wine scribbling, I'd never heard of Morrisons. But even if *Guardian* readers hadn't insisted I go and taste their wines, I would know about them now because from being a resolutely northern chain they have been spreading south in the past few years. Letchworth in Hertfordshire, Erith in Kent, Banbury in Oxfordshire, Ipswich – it can't be long before it sets up stall (and setting up a stall is very much what Morrisons still does, since it began that way in Bradford in 1899) outside my own front door in central London.

The money they save on not sending wine buyers abroad (though Stuart did manage to sneak off to Chile and do some good business there while the boys at the top were distracted by planning the company's centenary celebrations) ends up in the staff's pockets. 22,000 employees shared a £9 9 million windfall in a profit-share scheme which was, said fresh-fruit prowler Sir Ken Morrison, 'a much deserved reward for a terrific contribution to the group's continuing success'.

Being mean with the wine buyer also means being mean with the wine. Prices can be as low as they come on Mr Purdie's shelves. Wines at £2.99 are to be found here, and these are not discounted special offers but regular lines. In spite of this, the company makes loads of dosh. It announced pre tax profits for the year to Jan 2000 of £189.2 million (up 11%), a spokesman remarking 'it would continue to eschew convenience stores and home shopping in order to concentrate on its core supermarket business'

and that it would leave 'short term PR stunts' to its rivals (I thank the business journal *Supermarketing* for these titbits)

Morrisons was also actively breathing down its competitors' necks in other ways It has pressed for changes in planning legislation to allow it to open more out of town stores in the south of England and thus to hot up its war with Sainsbury's and Tesco. The legislation, Morrisons says, is anti-competitive.

What does all this add up to? A very buoyant business. Overall sales are running 17.3% ahead of last year and Morrisons' market share is up from 3.9% to 4.8%. Over the next two years the company expects to create 3,500 new jobs.

One of which will be a wine buyer to assist Stuart. Until she departed in the summer of 2000, he employed the extremely able Fiona Smith. Ms Smith, having distinguished herself as president of the boozers' club at Edinburgh University, got fed up, I suspect, with number crunching. She wanted to do what Mr Ken does· go about feeling fruit This fruit would, of course, be on the vine, rather than on the shelf, and be growing in exotic climes, not in Erith or Harrogate. You can see Ms Smith's point. If Morrisons has a weakness it is surely here. It is no coincidence that the company's smartest own label range of wines is the Australian inspired Falcon Ridge setup, which is sourced in France. Fantastic wines at fantastic prices, oh yes (see the ratings). But then France is only across the Channel. It's cheap to visit, whereas New World countries are not.

Stuart does a great job, but he won't be able to assemble a mouth-wateringly inexpensive, own label Australian range, for example, until he can feel the vineyard soil under his feet Romantic tosh? Well, other supermarkets don't think so They pour considerable management resources into wine and many buyers collect record Air Miles. At Morrisons there is just Stuart at the time of going to press - his bum on his office chair or in the driving seat of his company car ('100,000 miles in three years' he told me), but not in a business-class seat on Qantas.

Let's hope he gets an early Christmas present of a return air ticket to Adelaide from our Ken along with a new assistant wine buyer Any reader interested in the job should write to Stuart at Morrison HQ at the address below. I know it would be easier to give you his e mail address, but he doesn't have one.

He doesn't have an e-mail address? In the year 2000? Nope As far as I know he doesn't even have a computer.

Eeh, lad, computers cost money. Stick to stamps.

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ARGENTINIAN RED

Balbi Barbaro 1997	16	£7–10
Balbi Malbec 1999	13.5	£5.00
Balbi Shiraz 1999	13.5	£5.00
Santa Julia Sangiovese Bonarda 1999	13.5	£5.00

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Etchart Rio de Plata Torrontes/Chardonnay 1998	13	£5.00
Rio de Plate Chardonnay 1997	13.5	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Barramundi Shiraz/ Merlot NV	15.5	£5.00
Cranswick Kidman Way Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5.00
Cranswick Nine Pines Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5.00
Deakin Estate Merlot 1998	15	£5–7
Hardys Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1998	15	£5–7
Jindalee Shiraz 1998	13	£5.00
Lindemans Bin 45 Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15	£5–7
'M' Australian Shiraz Cabernet NV	10	£5.00
Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998	14	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998	14.5	£7–10
Thomas Mitchell Shiraz 1998	13	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Barramundi Semillon/ Chardonnay NV	16	£5.00
Brown Brothers Chenin Blanc 1998	14	£5.00
Cranswick Kidman Way Chardonnay 1998	15.5	£5.00

Deakin Estate Chardonnay 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Jindalee Chardonnay 1998	16	–£5.00
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	–£5.00
Nottage Hill Chardonnay 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7
Rosemount Estate GTR 1999	15	£5–7

BULGARIAN RED

Boyar Bulgarian Gamza 1998	14	–£3.50
Boyar Iambol Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14.5	–£3.50
Boyar Premium Oak Merlot 1997	15.5	–£5.00
Danube Red 1999	13.5	–£3.50

BULGARIAN WHITE

Boyar Pomorie Chardonnay 1998	10	–£3.50

CHILEAN RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	–£5.00
Antares Merlot 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Castillo de Molina Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5–7
Curioso Gracia de Chile Merlot 1998	16	–£5.00
'M' Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15	–£5.00
Undurraga Merlot 1999	13	£5.00
Villa Montes Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Vina Gracia Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	–£5.00
Vina Gracia Merlot 1998	16	–£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

35 Sur Chardonnay 1999	14.5	–£5.00
35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	–£5.00
Antares Santa Carolina Chardonnay 1999	16	–£5.00
Antu Mapu Reserva Rosé 1999	13	–£5.00
Antu Mapu Sauvignon Blanc 1999	13	–£3.50
Castillo de Molina Reserve Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7
Montes Alpha Chardonnay 1998	17.5	£7.10
Stowells Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV (3 litre box)	13	–£3.50
Villa Montes Sauvignon Blanc 1999	14	–£5.00

FRENCH RED

Beaujolais NV	13	–£5.00
Bouches du Rhone Merlot NV	15	–£3.50

Château Cadillac Legourgues Bordeaux 1997	15	£5-7
Château de Candale Haut Medoc 1996	15	£7-10
Château La Fage Cotes de Bergerac 1997	13.5	£5.00
Château Saint Galier Graves 1997	14.5	£5.00
Chinon Domaine de Briancon 1997	16	£5.00
Claret Bordeaux NV, Morrisons	13.5	£3.50
Falcon Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon, VdP d'Oc 1999	16	£3.50
Falcon Ridge Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999	15	£3.50
Falcon Ridge Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	£3.50
Fitou NV	13	£5.00
Heritage des Caves des Papes Côtes du Rhône 1998	15.5	£5.00
La Chasse du Pape Reserve Côtes du Rhône 1998	16	£5.00
Les Planels Minervois 1997	14	£5.00
'M' Côtes du Rhône NV	13	£3.50
'M' Cotes du Roussillon Red NV	13	£3.50
Minervois Cellier la Chouf NV	13	£3.50
Oak Matured Bordeaux 1997	13	£5.00
Rhone Valley Red 1998	14	£3.50
Saint Emilion NV, Morrisons	14	£5-7
Sichel Medoc NV	13	£5-7
Vacqueyras Domaine de Ameleraies 1998	14.5	£5-7
Vin de Pays de l'Hauterive NV	12	£3.50
Winter Hill Red VdP d'Oc 1999	14	£3.50

FRENCH WHITE

Bordeaux Blanc de Ginestet 1998	15.5	£5.00
Château La Fage Bergerac Sec 1998	13	£5.00
Château Loupiac Gaudiet, Loupiac 1996 (50cl)	16	£5.00
Falcon Ridge Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999	15	£3.50
Falcon Ridge Rosé VdP d'Oc 1997	14	£3.50
Falcon Ridge Sauvignon Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999	14	£3.50
Gewürztraminer Preiss Zimmer 1998	15.5	£5-7
Haut Poitou Sauvignon Blanc NV	14	£3.50
James Herrick Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Macon Villages Teissedre 1998	13	£5.00
Pinot Blanc Preiss Zimmer 1998	15.5	£5.00

Rhone Valley White 1998	14	£3.50
Saint Veran 1998	13	£5–7
Sancerre la Renardiere 1999	12	£7–10
Sichel Premieres Côtes de Bordeaux Blanc NV	12.5	£5.00
Winter Hill White 1998	14	£3.50

GERMAN WHITE

Kallstadter Beerenauslese 1998 (half-bottle)	15	£5.00
Kendermans Dry Riesling 1999	13	£5.00
Urziger Wurzgarten Spatlese 1998	12	£5–7
Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese 1997	11	£5–7

GREEK RED

Mavrodaphne of Patras	14	£5.00

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Ideal with Friends Chardonnay NV	12.5	£3.50
'M' Ideal with Friends Sauvignon Blanc NV	13	£3.50
River Duna Pink Pinot Noir 1998	12.5	£3.00

ITALIAN RED

Casa di Monzi Merlot 1999	13	£5.00
Chianti Uggiano 1997	12	£5.00
Montepulciano Uggiano 1997	12	£5.00
Puglia Primitivo 1999	13	£5.00
Valpolicella NV	12	£3.50
Vino Rosso di Puglia NV	10	£3.50

ITALIAN WHITE

Casa de Monzi Chardonnay delle Venezie 1999	13	£5.00
Casa de Monzi Rosato 1999	13	£5.00
Chardonnay di Puglia NV	13	£3.50
Di Notte Pinot Grigio 1999	14	£5.00
Inycon Chardonnay 1999 (Sicily)	13.5	£5.00
Ponte Vecchio Oaked Soave 1997	13.5	£5.00
Soave NV	13	£3.50
Verdicchio di Jesi Classico 1999	13.5	£3.50

MEXICAN RED

L A Cetto Zinfandel 1998	10	£5.00

MOROCCAN RED

Le Chameau Grenache Cinsault NV	11	£3.50

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Cooks Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999	13	£5.00

Montana Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999	15.5	£5–7
Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Dom Ferraz Dao 1998	16.5	£5.00
Tamara Red Vinho Regional Ribatejo 1999	13	£3.50

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Sinfonia White Alentejo 1998	13	£5.00
Tamara White Ribatejo 1998	12	£3.50

ROMANIAN RED

Romanian Classic Pinot Noir 1998	11	£3.50
Special Reserve Pinot Noir 1998	10	£5.00
Special Reserve Sangiovese 1998	10	£5.00

ROMANIAN WHITE

Romanian Special Reserve Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1996	16	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Cathedral Cellars Merlot 1996	13	£7–10
Fairview Malbec 1999	16.5	£5–7
Namaqua Classic Red NV (3 litre box)	11.5	£5–7
South African Red NV	13	£3.50
Spice Route Andrew's Hope 1998	16.5	£5–7
Van Loveren Merlot 1999	13	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Danie de Wet Chardonnay Surlie 1999	15	£5.00
Faircape Chenin Blanc 2000	15.5	£3.50
Fairview Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7
Namaqua Classic Dry White NV (3 litre box)	15	£5–7
Spice Route Abbotsdale Colombard/Chenin Blanc 1998	16	£5.00
Van Loveren Blanc de Noirs 2000	14	£5.00
Van Loveren Pinot Gris 1999	13	£5.00
Van Loveren Semillon 1999	14	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Viña Albali Tempranillo 1999	15.5	£3.50
Conforrales Tinto Cencibel 1998	15	£3.50
De Muller Pinot Noir 1996	13	£7–10

Gran Feudo Navarra Crianza 1997	13	£5.00
'M' Red Rioja NV	13	£5.00
Rio Rojo Tinto NV	14	£3.50
Stowells Tempranillo NV (3 litre box)	12.5	£3.50
Torres Sangre de Toro 1998	14	£5–7
Vega del Rio Reserve Rioja 1994	13	£7–10
Vina Albali Gran Reserva 1991	16	£5–7

SPANISH WHITE

De Muller Chardonnay 1999	13	£5.00
Sanz Rueda Superior 1998	14	£5.00
Vina Albali Rosado Tempranillo 1999	13	£3.50

USA RED

Blossom Hill California Red NV	10	£5.00
Californian Red NV	10	£3.50
Fetzer Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	14	£7–10
Glen Ellen Pinot Noir 1997	9	£5–7
Glen Ellen Proprietor's Reserve Zinfandel 1997	12	£5.00
Glen Ellen Zinfandel 1997	11	£5–7
Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1997	15	£5–7
Ironstone Vineyards Shiraz 1998	14.5	£5.00
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7

USA WHITE

Californian White NV	12	£3.50
Ironstone Chardonnay 1997	15.5	£6–7
Ironstone Chardonnay 1998	10	£5–7
Ironstone Obsession 1998	10	£5.00
Wente Johannesburg Riesling 1997	16.5	£5.00

SPARKLING WINES

Asti Spumante Gianni (Italian)	14	£5.00
Barramundi Sparkling NV (Australia)	15	£5.00
Brut de Channay NV (France)	11	£5–7
Champagne Philippe Prie NV	13	£10–13
Chapel Hill Chardonnay-Pinot Noir NV (Hungary)	12	£5.00
'M' Vintage Cava 1996	15.5	£5–7
Mumm Cuvee Napa Brut NV (California)	14	£7–10
Paul Herard Champagne Brut NV	12	£10–13
Paul Herard Demi Sec Champagne (half-bottle)	11.5	£5–7

Reminger Sparkling Brut NV (France)	10	–£5.00	Seaview Brut Rosé (Australia)	13.5	£5–7
Santa Carolina Chardonnay Brut 1996 (Chile)	13	£5–7	Sparkling Zero (alcohol free)	0	–£2.50
Seaview Brut NV (Australia)	13	£5–7			

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

ODDBINS

On my first visit to an Oddbins shop, the year the England football team was managed by an extremely successful bald bloke in a macintosh, I paid 24 shillings for three half-bottles of Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte 1933. I wasted my money and didn't get any of it back (one bottle oxidised, one bottle corked, one bottle boring). Oddbins has come on a lot since then, but one thing which has never changed is how seriously it takes its wine.

Let me illustrate what I mean with this single incident involving a single *Guardian* reader. I received, at the newspaper, this e-mail from Mr Loxton of Milton Keynes.

> *Dear Malcolm Gluck: I have often in the past taken your advice given in your* Superplonk *column in the* Guardian. *I have never previously had cause to regret doing so, but now feel so strongly about one particular wine that I have been moved to write a letter of complaint (a very rare occurrence). Several weeks ago (exact date not known) you recommended a red wine available from Oddbins, Domaine Remaury Cabernet Sauvignon Vin de Pays d'Oc, and gave it 17 points. On the strength of that advice I have today purchased (after having asked my local Milton Keynes branch of Oddbins to obtain it) 12 bottles. This evening I opened the first bottle, and was very disappointed in it. It has no character, has very little fruit flavour, and is distinctly 'chemical' in taste. I am not a wine connoisseur, but I can recognise a bad wine when I taste it It is so bad that I intend returning the 11.5 bottles to Oddbins as soon as I am able. I do not hold you responsible for my poor purchase, but I do want you to know that what is being sold in Oddbins as Domaine Remaury Cabernet Sauvignon Vin de Pays d'Oc is clearly not what was provided to you for tasting prior to your recommendation. Clearly, if others have received wine similar to mine, your reputation as a wine critic could be severely damaged. If you can reply to this e-mail quickly, I would happily make some of the wine available to you for tasting before I return it to Oddbins. I realise you must be a very busy man, but if you can find time to reply to this missive I would appreciate your comments.*

I replied immediately:

Dear Mr Loxton: Appalled to get your e-mail. Have you opened other bottles? The wine is patently faulty. Please try more bottles. You can still send the lot back to Oddbins and get a refund. I will send your e mail to Oddbins HQ who may get in touch. Let me know what happens. I take complaints very seriously. Since I give advice I expect it to be seriously swallowed. My readers cannot open the same bottle of wine as me, it is true, but they should approximate the same experience. Please keep me informed of developments – especially if all the other bottles are equally vile! Thanks for getting in touch. Malcolm Gluck.

I also contacted Karen Wise and Natashia Bartlett at Oddbins. They promised to look into it and alerted Steve Daniel, Oddbins wine-buying supremo. They also sent me, within the hour, two bottles of Remaury so I could check them for myself and Steve insisted that he would try to get Mr Loxton's bottles back and send them to a laboratory for testing to see what could be wrong with them. I tasted the two bottles I received, rather pleased to have them with Sunday lunch, as a matter of fact, and I found them as gorgeous as previously. I immediately thought Mr Loxton should hear of this and so I contacted him again:

Dear Mr Loxton: While we await the Oddbins boffin's report to see what caused the first of your Cabernets to be so repulsively sick and undrinkable I thought you might like to hear of my reaction to two Remaury '98 bottles I tasted, and then drank, over the weekend, which Oddbins sent to me. They were marvellous; more or less as before when I awarded the wine 17 points, though each offered an individual experience. Both bottles had good corks with no taint. Colour of both wines was excellent, full red, no browning or oxidation. Bottle one offered rich fruit and good tannins, slightly earthy. At £3.99, still 17 points. Bottle two was plumper, less dry, and the tannins more subsumed under the sweetness of the fruit. It had a little less character than the first bottle. I conjectured whether to knock half a point off but, nope, still 17 points. The lesson here was one I have been teaching for years: it isn't so much that corks spoil so many wines (as one did yours) but that the corks cause variation even on so young a wine as a 1998. I offered my wife, prior to roast duck for Sunday lunch, a glass of each and she definitely preferred bottle number one, saying it was more like her preferred earthy Rhône style. We drank most of both bottles with the duck and the cheese which followed. In sum, then, I think the wine is remarkable value for the quality of its fruit, and my wife, spontaneously, upon being apprised of this price said 'I wouldn't have believed it'. What does all this prove? Our tastes are our own and if you don't like Remaury that's fine

by me, though I must say I wish you'd opened more bottles to find one in perfect condition. Best wishes, yours sincerely Malcolm Gluck.

What were the results of the lab test? Three of the bottles returned by Mr Loxton (who got his money back), that is to say already opened samples, were sent to Geoff Taylor, who runs the analytic chemists Corkwise, and he found, as one would expect, oxidation in varying degrees with all three. But that was all. There was nothing else wrong with the wines.

What does all this prove? It proves how seriously Oddbins takes its wine, it proves how one bad experience with an 'off' bottle can spoil a wine's reputation, and it strengthens my belief that if all wines were screwcapped my readers would run no risk of finding themselves with faulty or oxidised wine on their hands

On other fronts, Oddbins has had an interesting year. In 1999 it cut staff overtime to four hours per week, according to *Off Licence News*. It was also reported that a more individual feel would be achieved in individual branches via a radical programme of refits. Although the stores will retain Oddbins' branding, the fascias, internal fixtures and the ranges will be customised according to the local environment and clientele. I've visited a dozen Oddbins in the past year and they look just the same to me, but that is often the secret of a 'radical programme of refits' – you can't tell that anything's changed.

Genuinely radical, though, was Oddbins victory in Parliament It beat eleven other wine companies to win the contract to supply the House of Commons with an own label Champagne. (So the hangovers you see evident on some of the jowls of elected Members during the TV broadcasts can be firmly laid at Oddbins' door.)

Oddbins also announced that the Irish side of its internet activities would be up and running by spring. The full UK service, at that time geared only to Champagne sales, became fully operational at the end of the summer Expect to see several current e-commerce wine sites suffering as a result of this and, along with this, further chatter about a buyer for the whole Oddbins wine chain.

Indeed, this old chestnut came out of the fire in no uncertain terms. Who *would* buy the chain, wondered the gossips in the wine trade? This speculation was refuelled by the probability that Seagram, which owns Oddbins, would withdraw totally from the drinks business (made speculatively probable by the Canadian group's dive into an embrace with the Vivendi company) The new price on Oddbins' head, £75 million a few years back, was said to be £50 million.

One idea no one broaches (except, perhaps, behind doors firmly closed) is the prospect of a management buyout. If Oddbins can become the most dynamic of e-commerce retailers over the next eighteen months, this is not a wholly romantic fiction.

I have no doubt that the brightest individuals at Oddbins, like Mr Steve Daniel, the dynamic and extraordinarily able director in charge of buying and marketing, are trying not to be seduced by these exotic, mind numbing possibilities. Oddbins has never been one to be swayed by pie-in-the-sky recipes, but it does have loads of marvellous wines to accompany such fanciful fare.

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ARGENTINIAN RED

Alamos Ridge Bonarda, Mendoza 1998	16	£5–7
Alamos Ridge Merlot, Mendoza 1997	16	£5–7
Bodegas Rosca Malbec, Mendoza 1999	15	£5.00
Bodegas Rosca Shiraz, Mendoza 1999	16.5	£5–7
Bodegas Rosca Shiraz Reserve, Mendoza 1999	16	£5–7
Famiglia Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon, San Rafael 1996	17	£13.20
Las Lilas Malbec Sangiovese, Mendoza 1997	15	£5.00
Norton Reserve Syrah Cabernet, Mendoza 1997	15.5	£5–7
Valentin Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon, San Rafael 1996	16.5	£7–10
Valentin Bianchi Malbec Reserve, San Rafael 1996	15	£7–10
Valentin Bianchi Malbec, San Rafael 1997	16	£5.00
Valentin Bianchi Merlot Reserve, San Rafael 1997	16.5	£7–10

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Alamos Ridge Chardonnay 1997	16	£5–7
Bodegas Rosca Dry White, Mendoza 1999	15	£3.50
Catena Chardonnay 1997	14	£7–10

AUSTRALIAN RED

Annie's Lane Shiraz, Clare Valley 1997	13	£7–10
Baileys Shiraz 1997	14	£5–7
Brokenwood Shiraz 1998	15	£7–10
Cape Jaffa Mount Benson Shiraz 1998	13	£7–10
Church Block Cabernet Shiraz Merlot, Wirra Wirra Vineyards 1998	17	£7–10
d'Arenberg The Footbolt Old Vine Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998	15.5	£5–7
d'Arry's Original Shiraz Grenache, McLaren Vale 1997	16	£5–7
Deakin Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Victoria 1999	15.5	£5–7
Deakin Estate Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon, Victoria 1999	15	£5.00
Deakin Estate Shiraz, Victoria 1999	15	£5–7
E & C Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale 1998	16	£5–7
E & C Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998	15.5	£5–7
Elderton Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa 1996	16	£10–13
Elderton Merlot, Barossa 1996	14	£13–20
Elderton Shiraz, Barossa 1996	17	£10–13
Elderton Tantalus Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5–7
Hillstowe 'Buxton' Cabernet Merlot, McLaren Vale 1998	15	£7–10
Hillstowe Udy's Mill Pinot Noir, Lenswood 1997	14	£7–10
Mamre Brook Cabernet Shiraz 1996	16	£5–7
Merrill's Mount Hurtle Bush Vine Grenache, McLaren Vale 1996	13.5	£5–7
Normans White Label Cabernet Sauvignon, South Eastern Australia 1998	13	£5–7
Normans White Label Merlot, South Australia 1998	13	£5–7
Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5–7
Penny's Hill Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998	16	£7–10
Peter Lehmann The Barossa Shiraz 1998	17	£5–7
Preece Shiraz 1997	15.5	£5–7
Rufus Stone Heathcote Shiraz, Victoria 1998	14.5	£10–13

Rufus Stone Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998	16.5	£7–10
Tatachilla Shiraz, South Australia 1998	15.5	£5–7
Wirra Wirra Original Blend Grenache Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1997	16.5	£7–10
Wirra Wirra Vineyards The Angelus Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	13	£10–13
Wirra Wirra W2 Grenache Shiraz Cabernet 1999	13	£5–7
Yarra Valley Hills Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	15	£10–13
Yarra Valley Hills Warranwood Pinot Noir 1998	14	£7–10

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Annie's Lane Riesling, Clare Valley 1999	15	£5–7
Antipodean Unwooded Chardonnay 1999	15	£5–7
Bleasdale 'Sandhill Vineyard' Verdelho, Langhorne Creek 1999	13	£5–7
Brokenwood Cricket Pitch Sauvignon/ Semillon 1999	16	£7–10
Campbells Liqueur Muscat, Rutherglen NV (half-bottle)	16.5	£5–7
Cranswick Estate Zirilli Vineyard Botrytis Semillon, Riverina 1996	16.5	£7–10
d'Arenberg The Olive Grove Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1998	16	£5–7
d'Arenberg White Ochre, McLaren Vale 1999	13	£5.00
Deakin Estate Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5.00
E & C Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1999	13.5	£5–7
Hillstowe Sauvignon Blanc, Adelaide Hill 1999	13.5	£5–7
Killawarra Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00
Knappstein Riesling, Clare Valley 1998	16	£5–7
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00
Nepenthe Vineyards Lenswood Unwooded Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£7–10
Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£5.00
Penny's Hill Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1999	16	£7–10
Peter Lehmann Semillon, Barossa 1999	16	£5–7
Rothbury Estate Hunter Valley Verdelho 1998	16	£5–7
Rufus Stone Sauvignon Blanc 1999	13.5	£5–7
Seaview Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1998	14	£5.00
Tatachilla Sauvignon Semillon, McLaren Vale & Adelaide Hills 1998	15.5	£5–7

Wirra Wirra 'Sexton's Acre' Unwooded Chardonnay, McLaren Vale 1999	15	£5–7
Wirra Wirra W2 Riesling 1998	14	–£5.00
Wolf Blass South Australia Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1999	16	£7–10
Wolf Blass South Australia Chardonnay 1999	16	£7–10
Yarra Valley Hills Kiah Yallambee Chardonnay 1998	12.5	£7–10

CHILEAN RED

Carmen Reserve Grande Vidure Cabernet, Maipo 1997	16	£5–7
Carmen Reserve Merlot, Rapel 1998	16.5	£7–10
Carmen Reserve Pinot Noir 1998	16	£7–10
Casa Lapostolle Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	17	£5–7
Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16.5	£7–10
Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Merlot, Rapel 1998	17.5	£13–20
Casa Lapostolle Merlot 1998	16.5	£5–7
Cono Sur Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	16	£5–7
Errazuriz Merlot, Curico Valley 1999	16.5	£5–7
Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1998	15.5	–£5.00
La Palmeria Merlot Cabernet Gran Reserva 1998	16.5	£7–10
La Palmeria Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot 1998	16.5	£5–7
Santa Rita Medalla Real Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£7–10
Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet 1998	16.5	£5–7
Santa Rita Reserva Merlot Unfiltered, 1999	16.5	£5–7
Veramonte Cabernet Sauvignon, Alto de Casablanca 1997	16	£5–7
Veramonte Merlot 1998	14	£5–7
Vina Porta Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1999	16.5	–£5.00
Vina Porta Reserva Unfiltered Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	17	£7–10

CHILEAN WHITE

Carmen Chardonnay, Central Valley 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay 1998	17	£5–7
Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Chardonnay 1997	18.5	£7–10
Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc 1999	17	£5–7

Casablanca Neblus Botrytis Chardonnay 1997 (half-bottle)	16	£5.00
Casablanca Santa Isabel Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7
Casablanca Santa Isabel Gewürztraminer 1999	14	£5–7
Cono Sur Gewürztraminer 1999	16	£5.00
Errazuriz La Escultura Estate Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998	17.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Wild Ferment Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998	17	£7–10
Isla Negra Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7
La Palmeria Chardonnay Gran Reserva 1998	15.5	£7–10
Veramonte Chardonnay, Alto de Casablanca 1998	14	£5–7
Villard Chardonnay, Casablanca Valley 1998	16	£7–10
Villard Reserve Chardonnay, Casablanca Valley 1998	15.5	£7–10
Vina Porta Chardonnay, Cachapoal 1998	14	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Abbotts Ammonite Côte du Roussillon 1999	15	£5.00
Baron Saint-Pierre, Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	14.5	£3.50
Château de Combebelle Saint-Chinian 1998 (bio-dynamic)	15.5	£5–7
Château de Valcombe, Costieres de Nimes 1998	17	£5–7
Château de Valcombe Prestige, Costieres de Nimes 1998	16	£5–7
Château Depaule, Cabardes 1998	16.5	£5.00
Château Grand Escalion, Costieres de Nimes 1998	17	£5–7
Château Lamarche Canon 'Candelaire', Canon Fronsac 1998	15	£7–10
Château Maris Minervois 1998 (bio-dynamic)	16	£5–7
Château Ollieux Romanis, Corbieres 1998	17	£5–7
Château St Jean de Conques, Saint Chinian 1998	13	£5.00
Château Vaugelas Cuvée Prestige Corbieres 1998	15.5	£5.00
Comte Cathare Fitou 1998	16	£5–7
Comte Cathare Le Clot La Clap Coteaux du Languedoc 1999	16.5	£5–7
Côte Rotie Guigal 1996	17	£20+
Côtes du Rhône, Clos Petite Bellane 1999	16	£5–7
Côtes du Rhône, Domaine d'Andezon 1999	15	£5–7
Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998	16	£7–10

Côtes du Rhône Les Arbousiers, Remejeanne 1997	14	£5–7
Crozes Hermitage Domaine du Pavillion-Mercurol 1998	15	£7–10
Crozes Hermitage Les Pierrelles, Belle 1996	13	£7–10
Crozes Hermitage Meysonniers, Chapoutier 1998	15	£7–10
Domaine Borie de Maurel Belle de Nuit, Minervois 1999	17.5	£7–10
Domaine Borie de Maurel Esprit d'Automne, Minervois 1999	17	£5–7
Domaine Borie de Maurel Reve de Carignan, Minervois 1999	14	£5–7
Domaine de la Vistoule Cabernet Sauvignon, VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£5–7
Domaine de la Vistoule Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1998	15.5	£5–7
Domaine de Montine Coteaux du Tricastin 1998	16	£5–7
Domaine de Saint Antoine Syrah, Costieres de Nimes 1999	15	£5–7
Domaine l'Aigueliere Grenat, VdP du Mont Baudile 1998	16.5	£7–10
Domaine Lafage Cuvée Les Cotes du Roussillon 1998	15	£5–7
Domaine Remaury Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998	17	–£5.00
Domaine Saint Jullien Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	15.5	–£5.00
Dourthe No 1 Bordeaux 1998	13	£5–7
Enclave des Papes Cuvée Speciale, Côtes du Rhône 1999	16	–£5.00
Grangeneuve Vieilles Vignes Coteaux du Tricastin 1998	17	£5–7
James Herrick Millia Passum Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	£5–7
La Maquis Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	16	£5.00
Le Grand Verdier, Minervois 1998	17	£5–7
Les Bories Blanques, Minervois 1998	15	–£5.00
Les Grandes Vignes, Côtes du Rhône 1999	16	£5–7
Mas Saint-Vincent Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Mosaique Grenache Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999	14	–£5.00
Mosaique Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1999	14	–£5.00
Pavillion de l'Escalion, Costieres de Nimes 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Plan Macassan, Costieres de Nimes 1998	16.5	£5.00

Ptomaine de Blageurs Syrah, VdP de l'Ardeche 1997	14	–£5.00
Santenay 1er Cru Les Gravieres, Domaine Bourgeot 1998	13	£10–13

FRENCH WHITE

Burgundy Blanc 'Cuvée Saint-Vincent', Vincent Giradin 1998	15	–£5.00
Château de Fesles Rosé d'Anjou 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Château Grand Escalion Rosé, Costieres de Nimes 1999	13.5	£5–7
Clos Petite Bellane, Côtes du Rhône 1999	16	£5–7
Clos Petite Bellane Rosé, Côtes du Rhône 1999	13.5	£5–7
Comte Cathare Domaine Begude Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999	15	–£5.00
Comte Cathare Domaine Begude Limoux 1998	15.5	£7.10
Comte Cathare Marsanne/Viognier, VdP d'Oc 1999	15	–£5.00
Domaine Borie de Maurel Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	£5–7
Domaine Borie de Maurel Cuvée Aude, Minervois 1999	15	£5–7
Domaine Cady Coteaux du Layon St-Aubin 'Cuvee Harmonie' 1997 (50cl)	16.5	£7–10
Domaine de la Renaudie Touraine Sauvignon 1999	14	–£5.00
Domaine de Montahuc Muscat, Muscat de Saint Jean de Minervois 1998 (50cl)	15.5	£5–7
Dourthe No 1 Bordeaux 1999	13.5	–£5.00
James Herrick Chardonnay 1999	16	–£5.00
James Herrick Domaine Les Garrigues de Truilhas Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£5–7
Kiwi Civee Sauvignon Blanc VdP du Jardin de la France 1999	15	–£5.00
Les Clos de Paulilles Rosé 1999	15	£5–7
Macon Davaye Domaine des Deux Roches 1998	16	£5–7
Menetou-Salon Morogues 'Clos de Ratier', Pelle 1998	13	£7–10
Montagny 1er Cru, Domaine Maurice Bertrand 1997	13	£7–10
Pouilly-Fume Le Champ des Vignes, Tabordet 1998	12	£7–10
Sancerre Domaine de la Rossignole 1998	12.5	£7–10
St Romain 'Sous le Château' Baron de la Charriere 1998	13.5	£10–13
St Veran les Cras, Lassarat 1996	12	£13–20

GERMAN WHITE

Durkheimer Fronhof Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslese, Kurt Darting 1998 (50cl)	15.5	£13–20
Lingfelder Bird Label Riesling, Pfalz 1999	13	–£5.00
Messmer Burrweiler Riesling Spatlese Trocken, Pfalz 1998	13	£7–10
Polz Grassnitzberg Grauburgunder 1998	11	£7–10
Ruppertsberger Reiterpfad Scheurebe Beerenauslese, von Buhl 1994 (half-bottle)	17	£20+
Von Buhl Deidesheimer Maushole Spatlese Halbtrocken 1998	14	£7–10
Von Buhl Forster Pechstein Riesling Kabinett 1998	14	£7–10

GREEK RED

Domaine Katsaros Red, Olympos 1997	17	£13–20
Gaia Estate Agiorgitiko, Nemea 1998	16	£10–13
Kosta Lazaridis Amethystos Cava, Drama 1995	13	£13–20
Ktima Domaine Mercouri, Peloponnese 1998	16.5	£5–7
Ktima Kyr-Yianni Ramnista, Naoussa 1997	16	£5–7
Ktima Kyr-Yianni Syrah, Imathia 1997	18	£7–10
Ktima Kyr-Yianni Yianakahori, Imathia 1997	15.5	£7–10
Ktima Voyatsi 1997	16	£7–10
Mavrodaphne of Patras NV (50 cl)	15.5	£5–7
Papantonis Miden Agan, Peloponnese 1997	16	£7–10
Tsantali Metoxi Agiorgitikos 1996	16.5	£7–10
Tselepos Agiorgitikos, Nemea 1997	15.5	£5–7
Tselepos Cabernet Sauvignon, Peloponnese 1996	15.5	£7–10

GREEK WHITE

Amethystos Fumé, Drama 1999	14	£7–10
Amethystos Rosé, Macedonia 1999	14	£5–7
Boutari Visanto, Santorini 1993 (50cl)	16	£5–7
Gerovassiliou White, Epanomi 1998	13	£5–7
Kosta Lazaridis Château Julia Assyrtiko, Adriani 1998	13.5	£5–7
Oenoforos Asprolithi, Patras 1999	13	–£5.00
Spiropoulos White, Mantinia 1998 (organic)	14	–£5.00
Strofilia Nafsika, Anavissos 1997	13.5	£5–7

Thalassitis Santorini Assyrtiko 1998	15.5	£5–7
Tsantali Ambelonas, Agios Pavlos 1999	13.5	£5–7
Tsantali Chromitsa, Agiorgitikos 1999	15	£5–7
Tselepos Mantinia 1998	13	–£5.00

ITALIAN RED

Barbera d'Asti Suri di Mu, Icardi 1998	15.5	£7–10
Barbera d'Asti 'Tabarin', Icardi 1999	14	£5–7
Ca'Vergana Barbera d'Asti 1997	14.5	–£5.00
Castello Le Leccia Chianti Classico 1998	16	£7–10
Cecchi La Gavina Cabernet Sauvignon, Toscana 1997	17	£7–10
Dolcetto d'Alba 'Rousori', Icardi 1999	16.5	£7–10
Felline 'Albarello' Rosso del Salento 1997	16	£7–10
Feudi di San Gregorio Rubrato, Irpinia 1997	16	£5–7
Frescobaldi Campo Ai Sassi, Rosso di Montalcino 1998	14	£7–10
Gagliardo Dolcetto d'Alba 1999	13.5	£7–10
Il Padrino Rosso Sicilia 1999	15	–£5.00
Il Tarocco Chianti Classico 1997	15	£7–10
Masi Modello delle Venezie 1998	15	–£5.00
Musella Rosso di Verona 1996	15.5	£7–10
Nolita Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998	16	–£5.00
Primitivo di Manduria, Felline 1998	15.5	£7–10
Rosso di Spicca Le Velette 1999	15.5	£5–7
San Crispino Primitivo del Salento 1999	16	–£5.00
San Crispino Sangiovese di Romagna Superiore 1996	14	–£5.00
San Fereolo Dolcetto di Dogliani 1998	14	£7–10
Scaranto, Colli Euganei 1997	16	£5–7
Tre Uve NV	14.5	–£5.00
Tre Uve Ultima NV	15.5	£5–7

ITALIAN WHITE

Arneis Roero Malvira 1999	13.5	£5–7
Cantine Gemma Moscato, Piemonte 1999	13	–£5.00
Chiarlo Nivole Moscato d'Asti NV (half-bottle)	15	–£5.00
Coffele Soave Classico 1999	14.5	£5–7
Feudi di San Gregorio Falanghina, Sannio 1999	13	£5–7
Gorgo Bianco di Custoza 1999	13	£5.00

Histonium Chardonnay, Abruzzo 1998	15	£5.00
Icardi Cortese 'Balera' Piemonte 1999	14	£5–7
Il Padrino Greganico/ Chardonnay, Sicily 1999	14	£5.00
Pra Soave Classico Superiore 1999	14	£5–7
Tenuta le Velette 'Lunato' Orvieto Classico Superiore 1999	13.5	£5–7
Trulli Chardonnay Salento 1998	16	£5.00
Villa Felici Orvieto Classico Amabile 1999	12	£5–7
Villa Felici 'Velette' Orvieto Classico Secco 1999	12	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Delegat's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Hawkes Bay 1998	15.5	£7–10
Montana Fairhall Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Marlborough 1996	13	£10–13

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Church Road Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Dashwood Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5–7
Hawkesbridge 'Willowbank Vineyard' Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999	15.5	£5–7
Hunter's Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£7–10
Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£7–10
McDonald Church Road Chardonnay, Hawkes Bay 1998	16	£7–10
Villa Maria Reserve 'Clifford Bay' Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999	16.5	£7–10

PORTUGUESE RED

Foral Douro Grande Escolha 1997	15.5	£5–7
Pegos Claros, Palmela 1994	15.5	£7–10
Quinta da Lagoalva, Ribatejo 1995	15	£5–7
Quinta das Setencostas, Alenquer 1998	16.5	£5–7
Quinta do Crasto Reserva, Doura 1997	17	£7–10
Segada Tinto, Ribatejano 1999	16	£5.00
Terra Boa Portuguese Red 1998	16.5	£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Bela Fonte Bical 1999	15.5	£5.00
Segada Branco, Ribatejano 1999	15	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Beyerskloof Pinotage, Stellenbosch 1999	16	£5–7
Blaauwklippen Shiraz 1997	13.5	£5–7
Boschkloof Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15.5	£5–7
Boschkloof Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot 1997	14	£7–10
Fairview Carignan, Coastal Region 1998	13	£5–7
Fairview Shiraz Mourvedre 1998	17.5	£5–7
Fairview Zinfandel Cinsault 1999	17.5	£5–7
Glen Carlou Pinot Noir 1998	13.5	£7–10
Kanonkop, Paul Sauer, Stellenbosch 1995	14	£13–20
Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£7–10
Longridge Bay View Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5–7
Longridge Bay View Merlot 1998	14	£5–7
Longridge Bay View Pinotage 1998	15	£5–7
Radford Dale Merlot, Stellenbosch 1999	14	£7–10
Savanha Shiraz, Western Cape 1997	13	£5–7
Saxenberg Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 1997	17	£10–13
Stellenzicht Pinotage 1998	17	£7–10
Stellenzicht Shiraz 1998	15	£7–10
Vinum Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 1999	14	£5–7
Yonder Hill Cabernet Merlot, Stellenbosch 1998	16	£7–10
Yonder Hill Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 1998	16.5	£7–10

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Boschkloof Chardonnay Reserve 1997	13	£5–7
Buitenverwachting Chardonnay, Constantia 1998	16	£7–10
Buitenverwachting Rhine Riesling, Constantia 1999	15	£5–7
Buitenverwachting Sauvignon Blanc, Constantia 1999	16	£7–10
Danie de Wet Chardonnay sur Lie, Robertson 2000	15	£5.00
Eikendal Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1998	14	£7–10
Fair Valley Bush Vine Chenin Blanc, Coastal Region 1999	15.5	£5.00
Fairview Akkerbos Chardonnay, Paarl 1999	16.5	£7–10
Fairview Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5–7

Fairview Cyril Back Semillon, Paarl 1998	16	£5–7
Fairview Goats do Roam Rosé 2000	16	–£5.00
Fairview 'Oom Pagel' Semillon, Paarl 1999	16.5	£5–7
Fairview Viogner, Paarl 2000	16	£7–10
Glen Carlou Chardonnay 1999	14	£7–10
Glen Carlou Reserve Chardonnay 1997	12	£10–13
Ken Forrester Scholtzenhof Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 1998	14	£5–7
Klein Constantia Chardonnay 1998	15.5	£7–10
Klein Constantia Riesling 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Klein Constantia Sauvignon Blanc 1998	15.5	£5–7
Longridge Bay View Chardonnay, Western Cape 1998	14	–£5.00
Longridge Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1998	13.5	£7–10
Radford Dale Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1999	16	£7–10
Saxenburg Private Collection Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1998	16.5	£7–10
Scholtzenhof Petit Chenin, Stellenbosch 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Slayley Chardonnay 1997	15.5	£7–10
Stellenzicht Sauvignon Blanc, Stellenbosch 1998	13.5	£5–7
Stellenzicht Semillon Reserve, Stellenbosch 1998	15	£7–10
Ten Fifty Six Blanc Fume, Franschoek 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Ten Fifty Six Chardonnay, Paarl 1998	14	£5–7
Vergelegen Reserve Chardonnay 1997	16.5	£7–10
Von Ortloff Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7

SPANISH RED

Artadi Orobio Tempranillo, Rioja 1999	16	£5–7
Bodegas Palacio Glorioso Crianza Rioja 1997	14.5	£5–7
Cosme Palacio y Hermanos, Rioja 1997	16	£5–7
Costers del Gravet Red, Capcanes 1998	17.5	£7–10
Dardell Negre, Gandesa 1999	15.5	–£5.00
La Cata Tempranillo, La Mancha 1998	14	–£5.00
La Vicalanda de Vina Pomal Reserva, Rioja 1995	13	£10–13
Olivares Dulce Monastrell 1996	16	£13–20
Piedemonte Merlot/ Cabernet Sauvignon, Navarra 1998	15	–£5.00

Raimat Tempranillo, Costers del Segre 1997	16.5	£7–10
Taja Gran Reserva, Jumilla 1994	16	£7–10
Taja Jumilla 1999	16	– £5.00

SPANISH WHITE

Burgans Albarino, Rias Baixas 1999	12.5	£5–7
Chivite Gran Feudo Rosé, Navarra 1999	14	– £5.00
Marques de Caceres Rosé, Rioja 1999	13	£5–7
Torres Vina Esmeralda 1999	14	£5–7
Vinas del Vero Chardonnay, Somontano 1999	15	– £5.00

USA RED

Bonterra Zinfandel, Mendocino 1996	16.5	£7–10
Canyon Road Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5–7
Canyon Road Merlot, Geyserville 1997	13.5	£5–7
Clos LaChance Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Cruz Mountains 1997	13	£13–20
Clos LaChance Zinfandel, El Dorado County 1997	16.5	£10–13
Fetzer Syrah 1997	14	£7–10
Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15.5	£5–7
Fetzer Vineyards Home Ranch Zinfandel 1996	15.5	£5–7
Fetzer Vineyards Select Zinfandel 1997	16.5	£7–10
Ravenswood Vintners Blend Zinfandel 1997	15	£7–10
Ravenswood Zinfandel, Napa Valley 1997	16	£10–13
Ravenswood Zinfandel, Sonoma County 1997	14	£10–13
Sterling Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley 1996	15	£7–10

USA WHITE

Canyon Road Chardonnay 1998	14	£5–7
Clos LaChance Chardonnay, Santa Cruz Mountains 1997	13.5	£13–20
Fetzer Bonterra Muscat 1999 (half-bottle)	15	£5–7
Fetzer Vineyards Bonterra Viognier 1998	16	£7–10
Fetzer Viognier 1999	15	£7–10
Landmark Overlook Chardonnay 1998	17	£13–20
Mariquita White 1996	14	– £5.00

FORTIFIED WINES

Bodegas Don Tomas 'Zingara' Manzanilla, Sanlucar Du Barrameda NV (half bottle)	16	– £5.00
Classic Fino, Valdespino NV	16	£7–10
Classic Manzanilla, Valdespino NV	16	£5–7

SPARKLING WINES

Billecart-Salmon Cuvée Nicholas Francois Billecart Brut 1991	14	£20+
Bonnet Brut Heritage NV	13.5	£13–20
Cuvée Napa by Mumm Blanc de Blancs NV	15.5	£10–13
Deutz Marlborough Cuvée (New Zealand)	13.5	£7–10
Henri Harlin Brut NV	15	£13–20
Lindauer Special Reserve Brut NV	14.5	£7–10
Mumm Cordon Rouge Cuvée Limitee 1990	13	£20+
Pierre Gimonnet et Fils Brut Gastronome 1995	13.5	£13–20
Pierre Gimonnet et Fils 'Cuis 1er Cru' Blanc de Blancs Brut NV	16	£13–20
Ployez-Jacquemart Brut NV	13	£13–20
Yellowglen Vintage Brut 1995 (Australia)	14	£7–10

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

SAFEWAY

The big event in this enigmatic retailer's year was the departure of Ms Elizabeth Robertson, who had been its strength, as controller of wine buying, for many years Liz had an unruffled, quirkily humorous intelligence, not so much typical of supermarket wine buyers as chemistry teachers and lexicographers. She has not been replaced – a gap has been created which has not been filled and as a result Safeway, though staffed with some highly professional buyers, has carried on much as before rather than made any startling advances.

However, on the non wine front, Safeway innovated. It mounted trials of coupon machines, in 1999, offering instant discounts on branded goods. Each pilot store had about twenty machines positioned alongside branded goods displays.

At about this time it appointed Roger Ramsden as its new marketing director. Mr Ramsden joined Safeway in 1995 and had been on the board since 1997. Mr Ramsden's appointment follows the departure of Roger Partington, who was reckoned by the supermarket wine press to have resigned as a result of this appointment. At the same time Carlos Criado Perez, previously chief operating officer of Wal Mart's international div ision, joined Safeway as chief operating officer. It was thought that he is being groomed to succeed Colin Smith as Safeway's chief executive

Change was much in the air, at this time, at Safeway. According to the *Grocer* magazine, the retailer and BP were 'racing ahead with forecourt development' The store also tested a new generation of personal hand-held scanners in a pilot scheme at its Malden store in Surrey. New gizmos on the new scanners include a voice intercom which allows shoppers to ask a helpdesk about the location of a certain product. It also has a sixteen line graphic display which can be used to inform customers about promotions.

In spring 2000 it reckoned to be introducing in-store radio in all its superstores within a few weeks Hard on the heels of this news (a step backwards in my view, for I loathe supermarkets which play loud music and constantly plague the ear with puerile announcements like 'Martin Fluck, the world famous wine celebrity, is now telling jokes and signing copies of his latest *Superplonk* paperback next to the bottle bank in the main

car park'), Safeway was reported to have suffered a sharp fall in the level of favourable price coverage it receives – in the second 'Food and Drug Retailer's Reputation Monthly' report – according to *Supermarketing* magazine. The reasons given were a fall in its share price and the potential impact on Safeway of a price war between Tesco and the Wal Mart generated Asda.

Nothing daunted, Safeway belatedly jumped on the sushi bandwagon, offering it in chilled counters to take away, and it also unveiled the first phase of its new look. Layout and presentation were changed in areas such as bakery goods and produce, though the wine shelves were untouched (they'd had enough tweaks and redesigns, unsuccessfully, over the past few years)

Then Safeway announced its 'new' logo. Well, you could have fooled me. The 'tweak' this so called new logo represented did indeed appear not much different from the old one, but Safeway management apparently described the new image as 'passionate, vibrant, and contemporary'. In keeping with this, the 'lightening the load' slogan has been dumped. It was anodyne, to speak flattering of it, and the ad agency that dreamed it up must have been desperate when they presented it and even more astonished when their desperate client bought it. The new branding is to be carried on all products and delivery vehicles and was introduced in all the company's 482 stores over the summer. Safeway did not reveal how much the redesign cost, but one anonymous authority I spoke to said 'millions, millions, think of all that paint and the hourly rate of the painters'.

Little of all this bravura enterprise brushed the wine shelves or changed much the wine buyers' lives. Just as well from our point of view because Safeway has an interesting range of wines well up there with the best in the business. The Australians, especially the reds around the £5/£7 mark, are quite brilliant, as testified by the high ratings awarded these wines in the pages that follow.

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ARGENTINIAN RED

Adiseno Bonarda 1999	15.5	£5.00
Adiseno Reserve Malbec 1999	15	£5–7
Argentinian Bonarda 1999, Safeway	14	£5.00
Argentinian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway	14	£5.00
Argentinian Red 1999, Safeway	14	£3.50
Caballo de Plata Bonarda/Barbera 2000	13	£3.50
Diego Murillo Malbec, Patagonia 1997	17	£5–7
Rafael Estate Malbec, Mendoza 1997	16	£5–7
Simonassi Lyon Barbera 1998	14	£5–7
Weinert Malbec 1994	16	£7–10

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Argentinian Chardonnay 1999, Safeway	16	£5.00
Caballo de Plata Torrontes 2000	13.5	£3.50

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Oaked Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway	14.5	£5.00
Australian Oaked Shiraz 1999, Safeway	14	£5.00
Australian Shiraz 1999, Safeway	15	£5.00
Australian Shiraz/Ruby Cabernet 1999, Safeway	14	£5.00
Basedow Bush Vine Grenache 1998	15	£5–7
Capel Vale Shiraz 1998	14	£7–10
Clancy's Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/ Cabernet Franc 1998	17	£7–10
Dawn Ridge Australian Red (3 litre box)	13	£3.50
Endeavour Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	13	£7–10
Evans & Tate Shiraz 1999	16.5	£7–10
Geoff Merrill Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	15	£10–13
Hardys Stamp of Australia Shiraz Cabernet 1999	14	£5.00
Haselgrove 'Bentwing' Shiraz, Wrattonbully 1998	14	£7–10
Haselgrove Shiraz, McLaren Vale 1998	14	£7–10
Jindalee Shiraz, Murray-Darling Region 1998	13	£5.00
Knappstein Cabernet/ Merlot 1998	16.5	£7–10
Koltz LFD Shiraz 1998	16	£7–10
Lindemans Pyrus Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot/Cabernet France 1997	16.5	£13–20
Mamre Brook Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15	£7–10
Mamre Brook Cabernet Shiraz 1996	16	£5–7

Masterpeace Shiraz Malbec 2000	14	£5–7
Metala Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	14	£5–7
Oxford Landing Limited Release Shiraz 1998	13.5	£5–7
Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz 1996	15.5	£7–10
Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 1996	16	£10–13
Penfolds Organic Merlot Shiraz Cabernet 1998	15.5	£7–10
Peter Lehmann The Barossa Shiraz 1998	17	£5–7
Riddoch Cabernet Shiraz 1998	16	£7–10
Rosemount Estate Grenache Shiraz 1998	15	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Merlot 1998	13	£7–10
Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998	15.5	£7–10
Rosemount Estate Show Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	13	£13–20
Rosemount 'Hill of Gold' Shiraz, Mudgee 1998	17.5	£7–10
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14	£5–7
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Tatachilla 'Foundation' Shiraz 1998	16	£13–20
Tatachilla Padthaway Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£7–10
Wirrega Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon/ Petit Verdot 1999	16	£5–7
Wirrega Vineyards Shiraz 1999	16.5	£5–7
Woolshed Cabernet/ Shiraz/Merlot, Coonawarra 1998	17	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Annie's Lane Semillon, Clare Valley 1999	15.5	£5–7
Australian Chardonnay/ Colombard 1999, Safeway	12	–£5.00
Australian Oaked Chardonnay 1999, Safeway	15	–£5.00
Basedow Semillon, Barossa Valley 1998	16.5	£5–7
Capel Vale Unwooded Chardonnay 1999	15	£7–10
Capel Vale Verdelho 1999	16	£7–10
CV Chenin Blanc 2000	16	£5–7
Endeavour Barrel-fermented Chardonnay 1998	14.5	£7–10
Goundrey Reserve Selection Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£10–13
Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay 1999	15	–£5.00
Jindalee Chardonnay, Murray-Darling Region 1998	16	–£5.00
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	–£5.00

Loxton Low Alcohol Chardonnay (1.2% vol)	11	under £3.50
Mamre Brook Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Ninth Island Sauvignon Blanc, Tasmania 1999	14	£7–10
Penfolds Bin 21 Rawson's Retreat Semillon/ Colombard/Chardonnay 1999	14	£5–00
Penfolds Eden Valley Reserve Riesling 1999	13.5	£7–10
Peter Lehmann 'The Barossa' Semillon 1999	16	£5–7
Peter Lehmann Vine Vale Riesling, Barossa Valley 2000	13	under £5.00
Riddoch Coonawarra Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7
Robertson Barrel Fermented Colombard 1999	13	under £5.00
Rosemount Show Reserve Chardonnay 1998	15	£2–10
Rothbury Estate Hunter Valley Verdelho 1999	16	£5–7
Taltarni Sauvignon Blanc, Victoria 1999	13.5	£5–7
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Chardonnay 1999	16	under £5.00
Tatachilla Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Tatachilla Padthaway Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Woolshed Chardonnay, Coonawarra 1998	16	£5–7

AUSTRIAN WHITE

Cat's Leap Gruner Veltliner 1999	12	under £5.00

BULGARIAN RED

Azbuka Merlot 1996	15	£5–7
Bulgarian Country Red, Merlot/Gamza 1999, Safeway	13.5	under £3.50
Nazdrave Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	13.5	under £5.00
Sapphire Cove NV	14.5	under £3.50
Suhindol Merlot Reserve 1996	14	under £5.00
Young Vatted Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway	14	under £3.50
Young Vatted Merlot 1999, Safeway	14.5	under £3.50

BULGARIAN WHITE

Bulgarian Chardonnay, Rousse 1999, Safeway	13	under £3.50
Bulgarian Country Wine, Welschrizling/Rikat 1999, Safeway	12.5	under £3.50
Bulgarian Oaked Chardonnay Reserve 1998, Safeway	10	under £5.00
Preslav, Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1997	16	under £5.00
Valley of the Roses Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 1999	14	under £3.50

CHILEAN RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	£5.00
Acacias Estate Merlot, Maipo Valley 1998, Safeway	14	£5.00
Carta Vieja Merlot 1999	14	£5.00
Castillo de Molina Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva, Lontue 1998	16	£5–7
Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Safeway	16.5	£5.00
Chilean Red 1999, Safeway	15	£5.00
Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1998	16.5	£5.00
Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel Valley 1999	14	£5.00
Cono Sur Reserva Merlot 1999	16.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon, El Ceibo Estate, Aconcagua 1998	17.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Merlot Reserva, Don Maximiano Estate Aconcagua, 1997	16	£7–10
Errazuriz Syrah Reserva 1998	16	£7–10
Isla Negra Merlot 1998	16.5	£5–7
Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon, Alto Jahull Vineyards Maipo 1997	16	£5–7
TerraMater Zinfandel/ Syrah, Maipo 1998	16.5	£5.00
Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1997	17.5	£7–10
Valdivieso Malbec Reserve, Lontue 1996	15.5	£7–10
Valdivieso Single Vineyard Merlot Reserve, Lontue 1998	16.5	£7–10
Villard Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Central Valley 1997	16	£5–7
Vina Morande Merlot 1999	15.5	£5.00
Vina Morande Pinot Noir 1998	14	£5.00
Vina Morande Syrah 1998	10	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5.00
Chilean Dry White 2000, Safeway	16	£3.50
Chilean Sauvignon Blanc Lontue 1999, Safeway	16	£5.00
Chilean Sauvignon Blanc/Chardonnay 1999, Safeway	15.5	£5.00
Cono Sur Chardonnay 1999	14	£5.00
Cordillera Estate Oak Aged Chardonnay Reserva 1997, Safeway	15.5	£5.00
Errazuriz La Escultura Estate Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998	17.5	£5–7
TerraMater Estates Sauvignon Blanc, Select Cuvée, 1999	15.5	£5–7

FRENCH RED

Anciennes Vignes Carignan, VdP de l'Aude 1998	15.5	£5.00
Baron de Lestac, Bordeaux 1998	15	£5.00
Beaujolais Villages 'Combes aux Jacques' 1998	12	£5–7
Bourgogne Pinot Noir 'Reserve de la Famille' 1996	12	£5–7
Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998, Safeway	16	£5.00
Calvet St Emilion 1997	13	£5–7
Château Clos de la Chesnaie, Lalande de Pomerol 1998	14	£7–10
Château de Coulaine, Chinon 1998 (organic)	16	£5–7
Château de Lausieres, Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	15.5	£5.00
Château de Villenouvette, Cuvée Marcel Barsalou Corbieres 1998	16	£7–10
Château Grand Champs Bordeaux 1998	13.5	£5–7
Château Jouanin Cuvée Prestige, Côtes du Castillon 1998	15	£5–7
Château La Rose Brisson St Emilion Grand Cru 1998	16	£10–13
Château Limonier, Bordeaux 1998	15.5	£5.00
Château Liversan, Cru Bourgeois, Haut-Medoc 1997	12	£7–10
Château Maison Neuve Montagne St Emilion 1998	15.5	£7–10
Château Montbrun Corbieres 1999	16.5	£5.00
Château Montbrun de Gautherius Corbieres 1999	15	£5.00
Château Philippe de Vessiere, Costieres de Nimes 1997	15.5	£5.00
Château Pourchaud-Larquey, Bordeaux 1998 (organic)	15.5	£5–7
Château Rozier, St Emilion Grand Cru 1996	13	£10–13
Château Tour du Mont, Haut Medoc 1998	13.5	£5–7
Chevalier de Malle, Graves 1998	14	£7–10
Claret NV, Safeway	13	£5.00
Corbieres 1999, Safeway	14	£3.50
Côtes du Rhône 1999, Safeway	14	£3.50
Crozes-Hermitage Etienne Barret 1999	14.5	£5–7
Domaine Chris Limouzi, Corbieres 1998	16.5	£5–7
Domaine de Contenson Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£5.00
Domaine des Bruyeres, Côtes de Malepere 1998	16.5	£5.00

Domaine des Lauriers, Faugeres 1997	16.5	£5–7
Domaine Montmija, Corbieres 1999 (organic)	15.5	–£5.00
Domaine Vieux Manoir de Maransan Cuvée Speciale 1998, Safeway	15.5	–£5.00
Enclos des Cigales Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1999	14	–£5.00
Enclos des Cigales Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Fleurie Domaine des Raclets 1998	13	£7–10
French Revolution Le Rouge 1999	16	–£5.00
Hautes Côtes de Nuits Cuvée Speciale 1996	10	£7–10
James Herrick Millia Passum Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	£5–7
Jean Louis Denois Mourvedre/Grenache, VdP d'Oc 1998	17	£3–7
L'If Merlot/Carignan, VdP d'Oc 1999	14.5	–£5.00
La Chasse du Pape 'Reserve Barrique' Côtes du Rhône 1999	16.5	–£5.00
La Cuvée Mythique VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£5–7
La Provincia Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah, VdP d'Oc 1998	15.5	£5–7
La Source Merlot/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999	15	£5.00
'Les Tourelles' Cahors 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Mercurey Raoul Clerget 1996	12	£7–10
Merlot Vin de Pays d'Oc 1999, Safeway	14	–£3.50
Minervois 1999, Safeway	14	–£3.50
Mont Tauch Merlot, Barrel Matured, VdP du Torgan 1998	17	£7–10
Moulin de Ciffre Faugeres 1998	16.5	£5–7
No 2 Château Lafon-Rochet, St Estephe 1996	13.5	£13–20
Oak-aged Côtes du Rhône 1999, Safeway	13.5	£5.00
Organic French Red VdP du Gard 1999, Safeway	13	–£5.00
Pinot Noir d'Autrefois VdP d'Oc 1999	13	–£5.00
Pommard Premier Cru Le Clos Blanc 1997	11	£13–20
Pommard Premier Cru Les Arvelets 1996	12	£13–20
Reserve Valseque VdP de l'Aude 1999	14	–£3.50
Savigny du Domaine du Château de Meursault 1996	11	£7–10
Syrah VdP d'Oc 1999, Safeway	15	–£3.50
Valreas Cuvée Prestige, Côtes du Rhône Villages 1999	16	–£5.00
Young Vatted Grenache VdP de l'Ardeche 1999	15	–£3.50
Young Vatted Syrah VdP de Vaucluse 1999, Safeway	15	£5.00

FRENCH WHITE

Bourgogne Chardonnay Barrique Reserve 1998	15	£5–7
Chablis Laroche 1999	12	£7–10
Chardonnay VdP de l'Herault 1999, Safeway	14	–£5.00
Château de la Gravelle, Muscadet de Sevres et Maine Sur Lie 1998	14	–£5.00
Château du Roc Bordeaux Sauvignon 1999	12	–£5.00
Château Magneau, Graves 1999	15	£5–7
Château Petit Roubie, Coteaux du Languedoc 1999 (organic)	13.5	£5.00
Domaine de Bosquet Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£5–7
Domaine de Ciffre Viognier VdP d'Oc 1999	16	£5–7
Domaine de l'Ecu Muscadet de Sevre et Maine Sur Lie 1999 (biodynamic)	12	–£5.00
Domaine Lafage Muscat Sec, VdP d'Oc 1999	14	£5.00
Dourthe No 1 Bordeaux 1999	13.5	–£5.00
French Revolution Le Blanc 1999	13	£5.00
James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999	16	–£5.00
L'If Grenache Blanc, Eleve en Futs de Chene, VdP d'Oc 1999	15	–£5.00
La Source Chardonnay/ Roussanne VdP d'Oc 1999	16	–£5.00
Montagny Premier Cru 1998, Safeway	14	£7–10
Pinot Blanc Alsace 1998, Safeway	13.5	–£5.00
Sancerre 1999, Safeway	12	£5–7
Sancerre 'Les Bonnes Bouches' 1999	13	£7–10
Sauvignon Blanc Cuvée Reserve VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	–£5.00
St Veran 1997	13	£5–7
VdP de l'Ardeche Rosé 1999, Safeway	14	–£3.50
Viognier Cuvée Reserve, VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	–£5.00

GERMAN WHITE

Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spatlese, Mosel Saar Ruwer 1996	16	£7–10
Oppenheimer Sacktrager Riesling Kabinett, Rheinhessen 1996	12	£5–7
Peter Mertes Dry Riesling 1998	12	–£3.50

GREEK RED

Mavrodaphne of Patras NV	14.5	–£5.00

HUNGARIAN RED

Chapel Hill Barrique Aged Cabernet Sauvignon, Balaton 1997, Safeway	16	£5.00

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Hilltop Bianca 1999 (organic)	14.5	£3.50
Hungarian Chardonnay 1999, Safeway	13	£3.50
Irsai Oliver 1999, Safeway	13	£3.50
Karolyi Estate Private Reserve 1998	13	£5.00
Matra Mountain Oaked Chardonnay, Nagyrede 1998, Safeway	13	£5.00
Matra Mountain Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Safeway	15.5	£5.00
Matra Mountain Unoaked Pinot Grigio 1998, Safeway	14	£5.00
Nagyrede Oaked Zenit 1998	12	£3.50
Riverview Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5.00
Riverview Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5.00
Tokaji Aszu 5 Puttonyos 1992 (50 cl)	13.5	£7.10
Woodcutter's White, Neszmely 1999	9	£3.50

ITALIAN RED

Amarone delle Valpolicella Classico, Tedeschi 1995	16.5	£10–13
Barolo Castello Riserva 1993	10	£13–20
Farnio Rosso Piceno 1998	13	£5.00
Inycon Merlot 1999 (Sicily)	15	£5.00
Sentiero NV	13	£3.50
Serina Primitivo, Tarantino, Puglia 1996	15	£5.00
Tenuta San Vito 1998 (organic)	14	£5.7
Terriero Sangiovese di Puglia 1998	14.5	£5.00
Villa Mottura Squinzano 1997	11	£5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Arcadia Veronese Rosato 1999	13.5	£5.00
Ca'Bianca Gavi 1998	14.5	£5.7
Cortechiara Soave Classico 1999	13.5	£5.00
Inycon Chardonnay 1999 (Sicily)	15.5	£5.00
Organic Soave 1999, Safeway	12	£5.00
Pinot Grigio Alto Adige 1998	16	£5.7
Sentiero NV	15.5	£3.50
Sicilian Dry White 1998, Safeway (1.5 litre)	13.5	£3.50

Terre Cortese Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi 1999	14	£5.00

MONTENEGRAN RED

Monte Cheval Vranac 1994	10	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Alpha Domus Merlot/ Cabernet 1998	15	£7–10
Delegat's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Barrique Matured 1998	15.5	£7–10
Ninth Island Pinot Noir, Tasmania 1999	11	£7–10
Villa Maria Cellar Selection Cabernet/ Merlot, Hawkes Bay 1997	14	£7–10
Villa Maria Reserve Wairau Valley Sauvignon Blanc 1999	17	£7–10

PORTUGUESE RED

Bright Brothers Trincadeira Preta 1997	14	£5.00
Falcoaria, Almeira 1997	14.5	£5–7
Miradouro, Terras do Sado 1999	12	£3.50
Palmela 1998	14.5	£5.00
Tamara Ribetajo 1999	13	£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Globus Ribetajo 1999	11	£5.00
Tamara Ribetajo White 1999	14.5	£3.50

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Delegat's Reserve Chardonnay, Barrel Fermented 1998	14.5	£7–10
Grove Mill Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£7–10
Montana Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5–7
Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£7–10
Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999	16.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£5–7

ROMANIAN RED

Idle Rock Merlot 1998	12	£5.00

ROMANIAN WHITE

Château Cotnari, Blanc de Cotnari 1998	10	£5.00

RUSSIAN RED

Caucasus Valley, Matrassa, Georgia 1998	15	£5.00
Odessos Steppe Cabernet Sauvignon, Ukraine 1998	13	£5.00
Tamada Saperavi, Georgia 1998	13.5	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Apostle's Falls Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£5–7
Arniston Bay Ruby Cabernet/Merlot 1999	13	£5.00
Cape Soleil Organic Pinotage 1998	9	£5.00
Fairview Malbec 1999	16.5	£5–7
Kanonkop 'Kadette' Estate Wine 1998	15.5	£5–7
Kleinbosch Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14	£5–7
Kleinbosch Young Vatted Pinotage, Paarl 1999	15	£5.00
Landskroon Cinsault/ Shiraz, Paarl 1999	15.5	£5–7
Landskroon Shiraz, Paarl 1998	15.5	£5–7
Simsberg Pinot Noir, Paarl 1998	13.5	£5–7
Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14	£5.00
Stellenbosch Merlot 1999	15.5	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Douglas Green Sauvignon 2000	15.5	£5.00
First Release Chardonnay 2000	13.5	£5.00
First Release Chenin Blanc 2000	14	£5.00
Sea of Serenity Dry Muscat 2000	14	£3.50
Vale of Peace Colombard 2000	14	£5.00
Versus 1999 (1 litre)	16	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Ceremonia, Utiel Requena 1996	16.5	£7–10
Cruz de Piedra Garnacha Calatayud 1999	14	£5.00
Navasques Navarra 1999	14	£5.00
Valdepeñas Reserva Aged in Oak 1995, Safeway	15	£5.00

SPANISH WHITE

Cruz de Piedra Garnacha Macabeo 1999	15	£5.00
El Velero Valdepeñas 1999	13.5	£3.50
Northern Block Macabeo, Lozano Estate, La Mancha 1999	15	£3.50
Orange Grove 1999	12	£5.00
Vina Malea Viura 1999	12.5	£5.00

USA RED

Echelon Merlot 1998	15	£7–10
Fetzer Bonterra Zinfandel 1997 (organic)	16.5	£7–10
L A Cetto Petite Sirah 1997	16	£5.00
Pacific Coast Ruby Cabernet 1998	15	£5.00
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7

USA WHITE

Bonterra Muscat 1997 (half-bottle)	15.5	£5–7
Fetzer Unoaked Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7
Ironstone Chardonnay 1998	10	£5–7
Pacific Coast Chardonnay 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Pyramid Lake Napa Gamay Rosé NV	8	–£5.00
Sutter Home Unoaked Chardonnay 1998	13.5	–£5.00

FORTIFIED WINES

Amontillado, Safeway	13	–£5.00
Blandy's Duke of Clarence Rich Madeira	16	£7–10
Fino, Safeway	14	–£5.00
Gonzales Byass Tio Pepe Fino Muy Sec NV	14	£7–10
Marsala Superiore, Garibalde Dolce NV (18% vol)	16	£5–7
Vintage Character Port, Safeway	13	£5–7
Warre's Warrior Finest Reserve Port NV	13	£7–10

SPARKLING WINES

Albert Etienne Champagne Brut Rosé NV, Safeway	13	£13–20
Albert Etienne Champagne Vintage 1993, Safeway	13	£13–20
Canard Duchene Champagne Brut NV	14	£13–20
Chandon Argentina NV	13	£7–10
Chandon Australia NV	13.5	£7–10
Chenin Brut, Vin Mousseux de Qualite (France)	14	–£5.00
Conde de Caralt Cava Brut NV	16.5	£5–7
Cuvée Signe Champagne, Nicolas Feuillate NV	14.5	£13–20
Freixenet Cava Rosada Brut NV	13.5	£5–7
Graham Beck Brut NV (South Africa)	14	£5–7
Lambrusco Rosé Light, Safeway (4%vol)	13.5	–£2.50
Lanson Champagne Demi-Sec Ivory Label NV	12	£13–20
Le Bron de Monceny Chardonnay Brut NV	12	–£5.00
Le Bron de Monceny Merlot/Gamay Brut NV	13.5	–£5.00
Le Monferrine Moscato d'Asti 1999 (5%)	13	–£3.50
Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand)	14	£7–10
Louis Roederer Champagne Brut Premier NV	13	£20+
Merlot/Gamay Brut NV (France)	14	–£5.00

SAFEWAY

Nicolas Feuillate Champagne Blanc de Blancs NV — 14 — £15–20

Piper Heidsieck Champagne Vintage 1990 — 10 — £20+

Pommery Brut Royal Champagne NV — 12 — £20+

Selection XXI, Champagne, Nicolas Feuillate NV — 13 — £15–20

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

SAINSBURY'S

There have been two big events in the life of this retailer's wine department and they both involved the same man. In summer 1999 Mr Allan Cheesman, director of wine buying, chucked it in to work as marketing director for the Australian wine producers BRL Hardy. He'd been at Sainsbury's nearly three decades. The department regrouped, around the efficient and extremely likeable Mr Allan Webb (perhaps the board thought that if they replaced one Allan with another Allan, complete with two ells, no one would notice), and made some important surges forward.

However, a year later and the first Allan is back, in a newly styled job as Director of Wine, but with day to day responsibilities for wine buying firmly retained by the second Allan There is a new regime at Sainsbury's helm, the purposeful Sir Peter Davis (the ex-Man from the Pru) now top tiller, and the company seems determined to make every effort to put itself back where it belongs: as Britain's number-one supermarket and food retailer. The return of Allan Cheesman in a more fluid role (ouch! uninten tional punning) – a role concerned with long-term strategy, e-commerce and the like only adds to these strengths. Too many Allans, though, spoiling the broth?

I don't think so. We shall have to wait to see the evidence of our own eyes and tongues (and pockets), but Sainsbury's has been clawing back some of its lost share of the wine market vis-à-vis Tesco and the Wal Mart charged Asda, and surely the return of Mr Cheesman can only enhance this progress

The estimable Claire Gordon-Brown MW also left, deciding that seven children and a husband in advertising meant that she really wanted to spend more time on part-time business pursuits at home. This was a blow for me because she was the epitome of efficiency and good sense and my main point of contact for checking wines, readers' complaints, and many of the sundry matters which add spice, and occasional dementia, to my life. However, in time-honoured Sainsbury's fashion, the department found itself another Claire (Whitehead, this time) and the transition from one Claire t'other Claire has not upset my routine one jot.

One aspect of Sainsbury's wine shelves over the past year has been the increasing number of bargains and special offers The following e-mail I

received from a *Guardian* reader in Canterbury illustrates the nature of these bargains perfectly:

> *Having enjoyed the* Superplonk *column since it started and having been wonderfully entertained by you at a wine tasting at the Waterstone's branch in Canterbury some years past, I cannot resist the temptation, by way of a thank you, of alerting you to an offer that Sainsbury's is currently running. To my mind their Agramont Crianza 1997 would be a bargain at the original £4.99, but at £2.49 (or less if bought in bulk - £2.35-ish) it must scandalise any upright capitalist who's invested in Sainsbury's shares. I drink far too little wine and without the discernment that I ought, but it's the best sub £5 bottle I ever glugged even the best £5 10 bottle although I have far less experience at such heady prices. At the ludicrous price of under £2.50 it has to be nudging 19 or 20 points on the Gluck Scale. Thanks for all the splendid bottles of wine I've enjoyed as a result of your informative and, not least, entertaining column. I must cut this note short, however, Sainbury's is only a couple of hundred yards from here and I've got another half dozen bottles to get before I reach the limit of 12 per customer . . . then again with a wife and both daughters over 18, I make that 48 bottles. Perhaps you'd better ignore this e-mail as there shan't be any left come Saturday. You're wrong about plastic corks though – I just regard the odd bad bottle as a minor, if annoying, 'conservation tax' to preserve all the superb wildlife of the Spanish cork oak forests. I do hope that you will be supporting the campaign by the RSPB to give like-minded folk the option to pick wines corked with the real thing by having it plainly stated on the bottle. With warmest regards and an apology for the closing polemic, John Cantelo.*

I replied as follows:

> *My dear sir: I remember Canterbury and not just from the time we met. I was once chased by a small group of violent squaddies, me and my beauty contest-winning girl, through the streets of Canterbury before I lost them, when I used to stay near the town on a farm as a teenager. Ah, those lost opportunities. I never saw her again after rescuing her. I was only fourteen. Alas, we shall not see the like of the Sainsbury's wine either. Too late to get it in the column, but thank you for telling me about it, though I did know it was on offer. I haven't tasted it for a while. Thank you for your kind words also about my column. As long as there is a breath left in my body, so will the column, Matthew Fort and God willing (I'll leave it to you to decide who is the most awesome editor of the two), continue. Thanks, best wishes, Malcolm Gluck.*

Sainsbury's, then, is not going to be outdone by the Morrisons and the Somerfields or even the Tescos of this world. Its bargains can rank up there with the best of them, though I balk at 20 points for that Agramont Crianza 1997 (17? perhaps 17.5?).

Behind such bargains, Sainsbury's has endured quite a year, though its problems were summed up, to my mind, by a committee-compiled new advertising campaign carrying the feeble slogan, 'Making life taste better'. You might say this of a soy sauce, or perhaps a cute brand of rock salt, but is this really the juiciest promise you can make to customers?

On other fronts, JS got back to its roots in city centres. It announced it was to expand its 'Local' convenience concept by opening a further two hundred stores within the next three years. It eventually plans to have 1,000 such outlets, and I can testify personally to the difference such a 'Local' store has made to the life of Westbourne Grove where I live. My neighbours have been crying out for a terrific local mini-supermarket since the local Sainsbury's closed down years ago when the superstore was built a pound's bus-ride away. Sainsbury's decision to close such local smaller branches years ago and concentrate on superstores I believe was ill judged and unfriendly – especially to elderly shoppers.

It was the accumulation of such dubious decisions which last October caused investors in Sainsbury's, according to a report in *The Sunday Times*, to accuse chairman Sir George Bull of failing to tackle the supermarket chain's problems. According to another report, this one in the *Guardian*, Archie Norman, who is credited with turning Asda around, declined an approach to take over at the Sainsbury's helm.

A little later *Retail Week* magazine reported that it was not just Mr Dino Adriano, then MD of JS, who was returning to the shop floor (to participate in a BBC2 documentary in which bosses of major companies returned to the sharp end) Some 4,000 head office staff were also being encouraged to pitch in at stores as part of a 'company bonding exercise'

Then, in spring 2000, things really hotted up when the new chief executive, Sir Peter Davis, arrived and hardly got his feet under his desk before he pulled a very sharp axe out of his briefcase. According to *Retail Week*, JS store managers were 'shocked and amazed' when their new boss ousted directors David Bremner and Kevin McCarten only 'one week after taking up his position' as supremo. Sir Peter said he wanted to assume direct responsibility for the supermarket business. Mr Bremner had been managing director for just two months. Mr McCarten, who as marketing director had approved the least appealing TV commercials ever written for a

supermarket (those dreadful episodes starring John Cleese), had been moved sideways to a position as stores director. But he was now replaced by corporate development director Robin Whitbread, a former colleague of Sir Peter during his ten-year stint at Sainsbury's between 1976 and 1986. The following month, four more senior directors left. Sir Peter was not hanging around and can take the whole credit for persuading the Mr Allan Cheesman referred to above to return.

There were, it seemed, no longer any Sainsburys running Sainsbury's. But the family fortunes are closely linked with the group's performance. Lord Sainsbury slipped from second to fourth in *The Sunday Times* list of fattest capitalist cats The family fortunes declined by some £900 million as a result of the fall in Sainsbury's shares.

Down today, up tomorrow. The nature of the casino; the law of the bourse. And Sainsbury's had to be seen to be making more assured strides, in an attempt to up its share price, by impressing City analysts. One way to do this, thought the wily Sir Peter, would be to employ a public relations person who knows the City inside, outside and backwards and no one, further conjectured Sir Peter, knows these configurations better than Jan Shawe, Mr Allan Cheesman's wife. Versatile family, the Cheesmans (more versatile, so it has transpired, than the Sainsburys) So Sir Peter has brought this estimable woman on board as well.

In another bold move, Sainsbury's also joined the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS). Clearly, the 'Local' concept qualified it for membership though since supermarket chains began to extend their shopping hours it was pointed out that most supermarkets were already convenience stores anyway. To which I would riposte that when I see how many of my neighbours are thronging my 'Local' Sainsbury's in preference to trogging over to the Sainsbury's superstore a 23 bus-ride away, I know what convenience really means. Sainsbury's is getting back to talking to, and listening to, its customers.

Inevitably, then, it introduced a person-to person communication facility for shop-floor staff. The so-called 'Quail' system was trialled at the Greenwich store and is now being introduced in 200 branches The hands-free system allows supervisors to call shop-floor staff to the checkout to help with price checks or to assist customers with their packing, the aim being to cut queuing at checkouts to a minimum.

The suggestion, anonymously put forward, that Mr Cheesman might care to extend this facility to wine department staff so they could contact selected leading members of the Circle of Wine Writers when a customer

had a particular tricky wine question is not, as far as I know, being actively pursued. However, with the new Sainsbury's which is slowly but surely emerging as a result of its scourging travails over the past few years, no one should put anything beyond the enterprising Mr Cheesman or the passionate Sir Peter Davis.

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SE1 9LL

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www sainsburys.co.uk

ARGENTINIAN RED

Alamos Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16.5	£5–7
Argento Malbec 1999	16	£5.00
Bright Brothers Reserve Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5.00
Bright Brothers Vistalba Malbec 1999	14.5	£5.00
Catena Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16.5	£7.10
First Ever Shiraz 2000	16	£5.00
Mendoza Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec NV, Sainsbury's	15.5	£5.00
Mendoza Country Red NV, Sainsbury's	15	£3.50
Santa Julia Oak Aged Tempranillo 1999	15.5	£5.00
Trapiche Oak Cask Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	17	£5–7

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Bright Brothers San Juan Chardonnay Reserve 1999	15.5	£5.00
First Ever Chardonnay 2000	13.5	£5.00
Mendoza Country White NV, Sainsbury's	14.5	£3.50
Tupungato Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's	13	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Shiraz 1999, Sainsbury's	15.5	£5.00
Banrock Station Mataro Shiraz NV, (3 litre box)	14.5	£5.00
Banrock Station Shiraz Mataro 1999	15	£5–7
Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999	13.5	£5–7

Hardys Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1998	15	£5–7
Hardys Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	16	£10–13
Hardys Stamp of Australia Shiraz Cabernet 1999	14	–£5.00
Leasingham Domaine Shiraz 1996	15	£7–10
Lindemans Bin 45 Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15	£5–7
Lindemans Cawarra Merlot 1999	12	£5.00
Lindemans Cawarra Merlot Shiraz Ruby Cabernet 1999	12	–£5.00
Lindemans Limestone Coast Shiraz 1998	15.5	£5–7
Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5–7
Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 1997	16.5	£10–13
Petaluma Bridgewater Mill Shiraz 1997	15	£7–10
Petaluma Coonawarra Cabernet Merlot 1997	16.5	£13–20
Rosemount Estate Cabernet Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1999	15	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998	15.5	£7–10
Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1999	15.5	£5–7
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14	£5–7
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Tyrrells Old Winery Cabernet Merlot 1998	13.5	£5–7
Wynns Coonawarra Shiraz 1997	16.5	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Australian Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's	16	–£5.00
Brown Brothers Late Harvested Orange Muscat & Flora 1999 (half-bottle)	16.5	£5–7
Hardys Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5–7
Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon (3 litre box)	15.5	–£5.00
Hardys Stamp of Australia Riesling Gewürztraminer 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Lindemans Limestone Coast Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5–7
Penfolds Botrytis Semillon 1998 (half-bottle)	15	£5–7
Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Penfolds Organic Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£7–10
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999	15	–£5.00
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Semillon/	15	–£5.00

Chardonnay/Colombard 1999		
Petaluma Bridgewater Mill Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Petaluma Chardonnay 1998	13	£13–20
Peter Lehmann The Barossa Semillon 1999	16.5	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Diamond Label Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Show Reserve Chardonnay 1999	14	£7–10
Stowells of Chelsea Australian Chardonnay NV (3 litre box)	15.5	£5.00
Tatachilla Breakneck Creek Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Tyrrells Old Winery Chardonnay 1999	14	£5–7

BULGARIAN RED

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	15.5	£3.50
Bulgarian Country Dry Red, Russe, Sainsbury's (1.5 litre)	14.5	£3.50
Bulgarian Merlot NV, Sainsbury's	15.5	£3.50
Domaine Boyar Premium Oak Barrel Aged Merlot 1997	14	£5.00
Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	14.5	£5.00
Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Merlot 1997	15	£5.00

CHILEAN RED

35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	17	£5.00
Chilean Cabernet Merlot NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	16	£5.00
Chilean Merlot, Sainsbury's	16.5	£5.00
Chilean Red, Sainsbury's	13	£5.00
La Palma Merlot Gran Reserva 1998	17	£7–10
Los Robles Carmenere 1999	16.5	£5.00
MontGras Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva 1998	15.5	£5–7
MontGras Carmenere Reserva 1998	14	£5–7
MontGras Single Vineyard Syrah 1999	16	£5–7
MontGras Single Vineyard Zinfandel 1999	15	£5–7
Terra Mater Zinfandel Shiraz 1999	16.5	£5.00
Valdivieso Malbec 1998	16	£5.00
Valdivieso Malbec Reserve 1998	16.5	£7–10
Valdivieso Merlot 1999	15.5	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

35 Sur Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5.00

Canepa Winemaker's Selection Gewürztraminer 1999	16.5	£5.00
Casablanca Sauvignon Blanc 1998	14.5	£5.00
Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé NV, Sainsbury's	15.5	£5.00
Chilean Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's	15	£5.00
Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV, Sainsbury's	15.5	£5.00
Chilean Semillon Sauvignon NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	13.5	£3.50
La Palmeria Chardonnay Gran Reserva 1998	15.5	£7–10
MontGras Reserve Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7
Santa Carolina Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00
Stowells Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV (3 litre box)	13.5	£3.50

ENGLISH WHITE

Denbies Estate English table Wine NV	10	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Beaujolais NV, Sainsbury's	13.5	£5.00
Beaujolais Villages Les Roches Grillees 1999	12	£5–7
Bordeaux Rouge, Sainsbury's	13	£3.50
Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's	13.5	£3.50
Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	14.5	£3.50
Château Beaumont Cru Bourgeois, Haut Medoc 1995	13	£13–20
Château Clement-Pichon, Haut-Medoc 1995	13	£10–13
Château Coufran Cru Bourgeois, Haut Medoc 1996	13	£10–13
Château de la Grande Gandiole Châteauneuf-du-Pape 1997	16.5	£10–13
Château de la Tour Bordeaux Rouge 1998	14	£5–7
Château Haut Bergey, Pessac-Leognan 1995	14	£10–13
Château Haut de la Pierriere Côtes de Castillon 1998	16	£5–7
Château Memoires, Bordeaux Rouge 1996	14	£5–7
Château Semeillan Mazeau Cru Bourgeois, Listrac 1996	14	£13–20
Château Tassin Premieres Côtes de Bordeaux 1999	15	£3.00
Châteauneuf-du-Pape Château de la Grande Gardiole 1998	17	£10–13
Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Domaine Michel Bernard 1997	15.5	£10–13

Chinon Domaine de du Colombier 1999	16.5	£5.00
Claret Cuvée Prestige NV, Sainsbury's	14	£5.00
Claret, Sainsbury's	14.5	£5.00
Classic Selection Brouilly 1997, Sainsbury's	14	£5–7
Classic Selection Châteauneuf-du-Pape 1998, Sainsbury's	15	£7–10
Classic Selection St Emilion 1996, Sainsbury's	14	£7–10
Clos Magne Figeac, St Emilion 1997	16	£7–10
Clos Rene, Pomerol 1994	16.5	£20+
Côtes du Rhône NV, Sainsbury's	13.5	£3.50
Crozes Hermitage Petite Ruche 1997	15.5	£7–10
Cuvee Prestige Côtes du Rhône 1998, Sainsbury's	15	£5.00
French Revolution Le Rouge 1999	16	£5.00
Hautes Côtes de Nuits 1998	12	£7–10
Hautes Côtes de Nuits Dames Huguettes 1998	13.5	£7–10
Jacques Frelin Organic Crozes Hermitage 1998	13	£7–10
La Chasse du Pape Côtes du Rhône 1998	16.5	£5.00
La Demoiselle de Sociando Mallet, Haut Medoc 1996	20	£13–20
LPA Côtes de St Mont 1997	14.5	£5.00
Marsannay Domaine Bertagna 1998	15	£7–10
Mercurey Clos la Marche 1997	13	£13–20
Merlot VdP d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's (1.5 litre)	15.5	£5–7
Merlot VdP de la Cite de Carcassonne, Caroline de Beaulieu 1999	16.5	£5.00
Minervois, Sainsbury's	15	£3.50
Old Git Grenache Syrah 1999	15.5	£5.00
Red Burgundy NV, Sainsbury's	12	£5–7
Santenay, Château de Mercey 1996	12	£10–13
Stowells Claret NV (3 litre box)	10	£5.00
Stowells of Chelsea Merlot VdP d'Oc (3 litre box)	15	£3.50
Syrah VdP d'Oc NV, Sainsbury's	15	£3.50
Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic)	16.5	£5–7
Vieux Château Landon, Medoc 1996	13	£7–10
Vin de Pays de l'Aude Rouge, Sainsbury's	16	£3.50
Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône NV, Sainsbury's	14.5	£3.50

Vin Rouge de France NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	13	£3.50
Vougeot Domaine Bertagna 1995	15	£13–20

FRENCH WHITE

Alsace Gewürztraminer 1999, Sainsbury's	16.5	£5–7
Blanc Anjou, Medium Dry, Sainsbury's	12	£3.50
Bordeaux Blanc de Ginestet 1998	15.5	£5.00
Bordeaux Blanc, Sainsbury's	14.5	£3.50
Bourgogne Blanc, Louis Max 1998	14	£5–7
Cabernet Rosé de Loire, Lurton 1999	12.5	£5.00
Chablis 1er Cru Les Fourchaumes 1998	14	£13–20
Chardonnay VdP d'Oc, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	15.5	£5.00
Chardonnay VdP du Jardin de la France, Lurton 1999	13.5	£5.00
Château Carsin, Cadillac 1998 (half-bottle)	16	£5–7
Château du Sours Rosé 1999	15	£5–7
Classic Selection Muscadet Sevre et Maine 1999, Sainsbury	16	£3.00
Classic Selection Pouilly Fume 1999, Sainsbury's	13.5	£7–10
Classic Selection Sancerre 1999, Sainsbury's	13.5	£7–10
Classic Selection Vouvray 1999, Sainsbury	15	£5–7
Condrieu Guigal 1998	15.5	£13–20
Domaine de la Perriere Sancerre 1999	13	£7–10
Domaine Leonce Cuisset, Saussignac 1996	15	£7–10
French Revolution Le Blanc 1999	13	£3.00
La Baume Sauvignon Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999	15	£5.00
LPA Cotes de St Mont Blanc 1998	15	£5.00
Macon Chardonnay, Domaine les Ecuyers 1998	16	£5–7
Mercurey Blanc Domaine la Marche les Rochelles 1998	13	£13–20
Montagny 'Les Rosiers' 1998	14	£7–10
Muscadet de Sevre et Maine sur Lie NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	13	£3.50
Muscadet Sevre et Maine Sur Lie, La Goelette 1999	14	£5.00
Orchid Vale Medium French Chardonnay Grenache Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999	13.5	£5.00
Petit Chablis 1999	13	£5–7
Pouilly Fume, Cuvée Pierre Louis 1999	14.5	£7–10
Reserve St Marc Sauvignon Blanc, VdP d'Oc 1999	16	£5.00

Touraine Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	~£5.00
Vin Blanc de France, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	12	~£3.50
Vin de Pays de l'Aude Blanc, Sainsbury's	15	~£3.50
Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne NV, Sainsbury's	15	~£3.50
Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	15	~£3.50
Vouvray la Couronne des Plantagenets 1999	15	~£5.00
White Burgundy NV, Sainsbury's	14	£5–7

GERMAN WHITE

Bereich Bernkastel Riesling 1997	12	~£3.50
Dr Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese 1995	13	£13–20
Fire Mountain Riesling 1999	13.5	~£5.00
Hock NV, Sainsbury's	11.5	~£3.50
Hock, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	14.5	~£3.50
Kendermann Dry Riesling 1999	13	~£5.00
Liebfraumilch, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	14	~£3.50
Mosel, Sainsbury's	14	~£3.50
Piesporter Michelsberg, Sainsbury's	12	~£3.50
Zeltinger Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett 1997	15	~£5.00

GREEK RED

Kourtakis Vin de Crete Red 1997	13	~£3.50

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Bin 66 Hilltop Gewürztraminer 1999	14	~£5.00
Hilltop Chardonnay Bin 058 1997	16	~£5.00
Hungarian Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé NV, Sainsbury's	11	~£3.50
Zenit Sefir 1999	13.5	~£5.00

ITALIAN RED

Amano Primitivo Puglia 1999	15.5	£5–7
Allora Primitivo 1998	15	~£5.00
Amano Primitivo 1999	15.5	£5–7
Barolo Cantine Rocca Ripalta 1995	15	£10–13
Bright Brothers Roman Vines Negroamaro Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15	~£5.00
Caramia Salice Salentino Riserva 1997	16.5	£5–7
Classic Selection Chianti Classico 1997, Sainsbury's	13.5	£5–7
Emporio Nero d'Avola Merlot 1999	14	~£5.00

Inycon Syrah 1999 (Sicily)	16.5	£5.00
L'Arco Cabernet Franc, Friuli 1998	14	£5.00
Lambrusco Rosso, Sainsbury's	10	£3.50
Merlot delle Venezie, Connubio 1998	16.5	£5.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1999, Sainsbury's	14	£5.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Connubio 1997	13.5	£5.00
Morellino di Scansano Riserva 1997	16	£7-10
Natio Organic Chianti, Cecchi 1998	13.5	£5–7
Nero d'Avola IGT Sicilia, Connubio 1998	15.5	£5.00
Rosso di Provincia di Verona NV, Sainsbury's	15	£3.50
Sangiovese di Toscana, Cecchi 1999	13.5	£5.00
Serrano Rosso Conero 1999	15.5	£5.00
Sicilia Red, Sainsbury's	15	£3.50
Stowells Montepulciano del Molise NV (3 litre box)	12	£5.00
Teuzzo Chianti Classico, Cecchi 1997	16	£5–7
The Full Montepulciano NV	13	£5.00
Valpantena Ripasso Valpolicella, Connubio 1997	14	£5–7
Valpolicella NV, Sainsbury's	13.5	£3.50
Valpolicella, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	12	£3.50
Via Nova Primitivo 1998	15	£5.00
Zagara Nero d'Avola Sangiovese 1999	14	£5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Bianco di Provincia di Verona NV, Sainsbury's	14	£3.50
Cecchi Tuscan White NV	13.5	£5.00
Classic Selection Frascati Superiore 1998, Sainsbury's	13.5	£5–7
Connubio Pinot Grigio delle Venezie 1999	14.5	£5.00
Enofriulia Pinot Grigio Collio 1998	16	£5–7
Inycon Chardonnay 1999 (Sicily)	15.5	£5.00
Lambrusco dell'Emilia Bianco. Sainsbury's	12	£5.00
Lambrusco Rosato, Sainsbury's	13	£3.50
Lambrusco Secco, Sainsbury's	11	£3.50
Piave Organic Pinot Grigio 1999	16	£5.00
Pinot Bianco delle Venezie 1999, Sainsbury	14	£5.00
Sartori Organic Soave 1999	13.5	£5.00
Sicilian White, Sainsbury's	13.5	£3.50

Soave, Sainsbury's	15.5	£3.50
Soave, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	15	£3.50
Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico 1999, Sainsbury	14.5	£5.00
Villa Bianchi Verdicchio 1999	13	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Shingle Peak Pinot Nor 1999	13	£5–7

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Cooks Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1998	13.5	£5.00
Grove Mill Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£7–10
Millton New Zealand Organic Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5–7
Montana 'B' Brancott Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1998	16	£10–13
Montana Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1998	16	£5–7
Shingle Peak Chardonnay, Marlborough 1998	16.5	£5–7
Shingle Peak Pinot Gris, Marlborough 1999	16.5	£5–7
Shingle Peak Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1998	16	£5–7
Stoneleigh Vineyard Chardonnay, Marlborough 1997	15.5	£5–7
The Sanctuary Chardonnay, Marlborough 1997	16	£5–7
The Sanctuary Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5–7
Villa Maria East Coast Chardonnay 1998	14	£5–7
Villa Maria Private Bin Sauvignon, Marlborough 1998	17	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Quinta de Bons-Ventos 1999	14	£5.00
Ramada 1999	13	£3.50
Segada Trincadeira Preta-Castelao 1999	14	£5.00
Senda do Vale Trincadeira Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15.5	£5–7

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Portuguese Rosé, Sainsbury's	13.5	£3.50
Vinho Verde, Sainsbury's	13.5	£3.50

ROMANIAN WHITE

Romanian Merlot Rosé NV, Sainsbury's	14	£3.50

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

African Legend Shiraz The Quivering Spear 1998	15	–£5.00
Bellingham Merlot 1998	16	£5–7
Bellingham Premium Pinotage 1998	14	£7–10
Bellingham Shiraz 1998	16	£5–7
Clos Malverne Cabernet Pinotage 1998	15	£5–7
Fairview Carignan 1999	15.5	£5–7
Fairview Pinotage 1999	17	£5–7
Hidden Valley Limited Release Pinotage 1997	13	£13–20
Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998	16	–£5.00
Middlevlei Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5–7
Milton Grove Cabernet Franc 1999	16	£5–7
Railroad Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	15.5	–£5.00
South African Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Sainsbury's	15.5	–£5.00
South African Pinotage NV, Sainsbury's	16	–£5.00
South African Red NV, Sainsbury's	15	–£3.50
South African Reserve Selection Pinotage 1998, Sainsbury's	16.5	£5–7
Spice Route Andrew's Hope Cabernet Merlot 1999	16.5	£5–7
Spice Route Flagship Merlot 1998	17	£13–20
Stowells of Chelsea Cinsault Pinotage Sainsbury (3 litre box)	15.5	–£5.00
Winds of Change Pinotage Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	–£5.00
Yonder Hill Inanda 1997	17	£7–10

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Call of the African Eagle Chardonnay 1999	17	£5–7
Gioya Kgeisje Chardonnay/Sauvignon 2000	14	–£5.00
Rhona Muscadel 1996	16	£5–7
South African Chardonnay NV, Sainsbury's	14	–£5.00
South African Chenin Blanc NV, Sainsbury's	15	–£3.50
South African Chenin Blanc NV, Sainsbury's (3 litre box)	14.5	–£3.50
South African Colombard NV, Sainsbury's	14	–£5.00
South African Medium White NV, Sainsbury's	13	£3.50
South African Reserve Selection Chardonnay 1999, Sainsbury's	15.5	£5–7
Springfield Estate Methode Ancienne Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£10–13
Vergelegen Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Vergelegen Chardonnay Reserve 1998	16.5	£7–10

Vergelegen Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 1999	17.5	£7–10
Waterside White Chardonnay Colombard 1999	15.5	–£5.00

SPANISH RED

Alteza 600 Old Vines Garnacha NV	16	–£5.00
Alteza 750 Tempranillo NV	16	£5.00
Alteza 775 Tempranillo Cabernet Sauvignon NV	16	–£5.00
Classic Selection Rioja Reserva 1996, Sainsbury's	12	£7–10
Dama de Toro 1999	16.5	£5.00
Enate Cabernet Merlot 1998	16.5	£5–7
Jumilla NV, Sainsbury's	15.5	–£5.00
Marques de Vitoria Rioja Crianza 1995 (organic)	13.5	£7–10
Navarra NV, Sainsbury's	16	£5.00
Navarra Tempranillo/ Cabernet Sauvignon Crianza 1995, Sainsbury's	16	–£5.00
Old Vines Garnacha, Navarra NV	15.5	–£5.00
Stowells of Chelsea Tempranillo NV (3 litre box)	13	–£3.50
Torres Gran Sangre de Toro 1996	16	£5–7
Valencia Oak Aged NV, Sainsbury's	13.5	–£5.00
Vina Albali Gran Reserva 1993	15	£5–7
Vina Ardanza Rioja Reserva 1994	14.5	£10–13

SPANISH WHITE

Dry White NV, Sainsbury's	14	–£3.50
Lagar de Cervera 1999	13	£7–10
Oaked Viura, Alteza 640 NV	15.5	–£5.00

URUGUAYAN RED

Bright Brothers Merlot/ Tannat 1998	14	–£5.00

USA RED

Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 (organic)	17	£7–10
Bonterra Zinfandel 1997 (organic)	16	£7–10
Coastal Pinot Noir, Robert Mondavi 1996	16	£7–10
Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998	15.5	£5–7
Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15.5	£5–7
Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	10	£5–7
Mondavi Coastal Merlot 1997	16	£7–10
Stonybrook Vineyard Merlot 1998	16	£5–7
Sutter Home Merlot 1998	13	–£5.00
Sutter Home Pinot Noir 1997	13	£5–7

Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7

USA WHITE

Bonterra Chardonnay 1998 (organic)	13.5	£7–10
Bonterra Muscat (half-bottle) (organic)	15.5	£5–7
Coastal Chardonnay, Robert Mondavi 1997	12	£7–10
Fetzer Barrel Select Chardonnay 1997	15	£7–10
Gallo Colombard NV	11	–£5.00
Stonybrook Vineyards Chardonnay 1997	16	–£5.00

FORTIFIED WINES

Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira	15.5	£7–10
Gonzales Byass Matusalem NV (half-bottle)	17.5	£10–13
Medium Dry Montilla, Sainsbury's	13.5	–£3.50
Pale Cream Montilla, Sainsbury's	14	–£3.50
Pale Cream Sherry, Sainsbury's	15.5	–£5.00
Pale Dry Amontillado, Sainsbury's	15	–£5.00
Pale Dry Fino Sherry, Sainsbury's	15	£5–7
Pale Dry Manzanilla, Sainsbury's	15	–£5.00
Pale Dry Montilla, Sainsbury's	14	–£3.50
Ruby Port, Sainsbury's	15	£5–7
Sainsbury's LBV Port 1992	15.5	£7–10
Tawny Port, Sainsbury's	13.5	£5–7
Ten Year Old Tawny Port, Sainsbury's	15	£7–10

SPARKLING WINES

Asti, Sainsbury's (Italy)	13	–£5.00
Australian Sparkling Wine, Sainsbury's	13	–£5.00
Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Sainsbury's	16	£10–13
Cava Brut NV, Sainsbury's	16.5	–£5.00
Cava Rosado Brut, Sainsbury's	15	–£5.00
Champagne Canard Duchene NV	14	£13–20
Champagne Chanoine 1990	15.5	£13–20
Champagne Charles Heidsieck Mis en Cave 1995	14.5	£20+
Champagne Demi-Sec NV, Sainsbury's	14	£10–13
Champagne Jeanmaire Brut 1990	14	£13–20
Champagne Krug Grande Cuvée	10	£20+

Champagne Lanson Black Label Brut NV	13.5	£13–20
Champagne Laurent Perrier NV	13.5	£20+
Champagne Louis Roederer NV	13	£20+
Champagne Nicolas Feuillate Premier Cru NV	14	£13–20
Champagne Perrier-Jouet NV	14	£13–20
Champagne Pol Roger 1990	13	£20+
Champagne Pommery Brut Royal NV	13	£20+
Champagne Premier Cru Extra Dry, Sainsbury's	15	£13–20
Champagne Veuve Clicquot Grande Dame 1990	12	£20+
Chardonnay Brut, Methode Traditionelle, Sainsbury's (France)	15	£5–7
Freixenet Cava Rosada NV	13.5	£5–7
Grand Cru Millennium Champagne 1995, Sainsbury's	13	£13–20
Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay Brut 1998	15	£5–7
Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay/ Pinot Noir Brut NV	14	£5–7
Jacobs Creek Chardonnay/Pinot Noir Brut NV (Australia)	13	£5–7
Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand)	16	£7–10
Millennium Vintage Cava 1997, Sainsbury's	13	£5–7
Mumm Champagne Brut NV	13	£13–20
Piper Heidsieck Brut NV	15	£13–20
Sekt, Medium Dry, Sainsbury's (Germany)	13	£5.00
Vin Mousseux Brut, Sainsbury's (France)	13	£5.00
Vintage Blanc de Blancs Champagne 1993, Sainsbury's	14	£13–20

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

SOMERFIELD/KWIK SAVE

The current range at Mrs Mount's supermarket (I prefer this appellation to Somerfield or Kwik Save) is the finest it has ever been. Just look at the ratings of the wines which follow. Yet this is a woman who operates from home Mondays and Thursdays so she can spend time with her two children. Never, in all my time wine range tasting and commentating, has a supermarket more successfully gathered together, at one time, such a tasty set of wine ranges from all countries, covering all styles of wines at several prices points (though the £3.29 to £4.99 bracket dominates, as it must).

Ange, my readers love you (I cannot pretend to be unmoved myself). And not just because of the abundance of sanely priced, richly fruity wines but also because of the monthly wine offers where that beast I thought would become extinct a decade ago still breathes: the £1.99 and £2.29 bottle.

In spite of Mrs Mount's heroic efforts, Somerfield has a fight to stay competitive. In 1999 it announced plans to woo 'one million time poor consumers' with the launch of its 24–7 home-shopping service to be backed by a multi-million-pound marketing campaign. Dinner-for-two, wine and beer selections and other specially grouped products are featured as '24–7' solutions, featured prominently in 24-7 catalogues to be distributed to a million households. This Somerfield offer carried some 5,000 lines and made it the first supermarket home shopping offer which could be accessed by the internet, interactive TV, telephone or fax. How's it feel to be the Queen of the Couch Potato wine market, Angela?

Famously, Somerfield purchased Kwik Save in 1999. *Off Licence News* reported that Somerfield was bidding to arrest the decline in the fortunes of this new acquisition by redesigning the chain's off-licence sections. Seven key Kwik Save stores were quickly revamped and some 140 further ones were scheduled for change over the year. The overhaul features a greater range of Somerfield's own label wines together with a bigger selection of beers and spirits.

At this time, Mrs Mount was already sowing the seeds of the ranges we now see on shelf. She doubled the store's range of wines from Iberia and introduced a number of new additions from South America in a bid to cater

for changing tastes in drinking patterns. Red wines from Spain and Portugal priced between £3.50 and £5 were among some forty newcomers and the newer vintages of these, as you can readily see from the ratings which follow, give Somerfield and Kwik Save one of the most competitive wine ranges around.

Yet in October 1999 Somerfield was denying a report in the *Independent on Sunday* that it was considering selling off all its stores and reinventing itself as a home delivery company. Somerfield was reportedly looking for a friendly takeover or a merger. *Retail Week* magazine reported that discount chains such as Aldi, Netto and Lidl would be the most likely buyers for the 350 Kwik Save stores now put on the market by Somerfield. These stores, 'in secondary and tertiary' locations, so it was said, are of interest only to the toughest of the so-called 'hard' discounters.

Come the dawn of the new millennium, Somerfield insisted that its tighter focus on smaller stores and home shopping guaranteed it a long-term future. This statement came as the retailer announced a halving of its interim pre-tax profits from £113.8 million to £63.9 million.

In March 2000 it launched Somerfield Link, a free delivery service to village shops and small stores around the UK. The scheme, similar to the Sainsbury's SAVE initiative, will offer some 12,000 lines and hardly endear it to the likes of the Spar franchised chain which can't, where wine is concerned, compete with supermarket pricing. At this time, speculation was rife about a possible takeover of Somerfield. Venture capitalists, buyout specialists and banks, and other assorted vultures, were all rumoured to be looking at ways to pick the bones of the ailing retailer (when, of course, it was very far from being dead). Somerfield admitted that it had received offers but nothing more.

Alan Smith then took over from David Simons as chief executive. Mr Smith was formerly chief executive of Punch Taverns and managing director of Kingfisher's B&Q and Superdrug chains, so his pedigree was, and is, excellent. He quickly announced a reprieve for the 350 Kwik Save stores put up for sale by his predecessor, planning to resurrect the discount chain and giving it its own management team under managing director Simon Hughes The programme to convert some 400 Kwik Save stores to the Somerfield format was also cancelled with only a small number of stores 'in certain locations' being converted to the Somerfield identity.

Somerfield now conducted an in-depth review of its 24–7 home shopping business which could result in its being sold off. On the other hand, the review could lead to more investment for 24-7 or the offer of equity to

strategic partners in the scheme. At the time of writing, it is not certain which way this particular nut will be cracked.

Yet through all these twists and turns in the Somerfield saga, Mrs Angela Mount enthusiastically beavers away, putting all these terrific wine ranges together. I simply don't know how she does it. Frankly, I can't for the life of me understand why a competitor doesn't snap her up, put her on the board as Director of Off Licensed Trading, give her a yellow Ferrari, and pay her £250,000 a year. A day and a half a fortnight should be sufficient I would have thought, not counting, of course, all those trips to the south of France, Sydney and Adelaide, Cape Town, Santiago, Beunos Aires, Puglia and La Mancha. Let's hope the children like travelling.

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BS14 0TJ

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Fax 0117 978 0629
www.somerfield.co.uk

ARGENTINIAN RED

Argentine Tempranillo 1999, Somerfield	16	£5.00
Bright Brothers San Juan Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	16.5	£5.00
First Ever Shiraz 2000	16	£5.00
Santa Julia Sangiovese 1999, Somerfield	15.5	£5.00
Trivento Syrah 1999	15.5	£5.00

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Argentine Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield	16	£5.00
Bright Brothers Argentine Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield	16	£5.00
Bright Brothers San Juan Chardonnay Reserve 1999	15.5	£5.00
First Ever Chardonnay 2000	13.5	£5.00
Santa Julia Syrah Rosé 2000	15.5	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Somerfield	15.5	£5.00
Australian Dry Red 1999, Somerfield	14.5	£5.00
Australian Shiraz Cabernet 1999, Somerfield	15	£5.00
Banrock Station Shiraz Mataro 1999	15	£5.00
Hardys Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 1998	15	£5–7
Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/ Shiraz 1999	16.5	£5–7
Hardys Stamp Shiraz Cabernet 1999	14	£5.00
Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 1997	17	£7–10
Penfolds Coonawarra Bin 128 Shiraz 1996	15.5	£7–10
Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Shiraz 1998	15.5	£7–10
Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1998	15.5	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Australian Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield	15.5	£5.00
Australian Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield	14.5	£5.00
Banrock Station Chardonnay 1999	14	£5.00
Banrock Station Colombard Chardonnay 1999	15	£5.00
Hardys Chardonnay Sauvignon Blanc 1998	15	£5–7
Hardys Padthaway Chardonnay 1996	16	£7–10
Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon 1999	15	£5.00
Hardys Stamp of Australia Riesling Gewürztraminer 1999	15.5	£5.00
Hardys Stamp Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999	15	£5.00
Jacobs Creek Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5.00
Jindalee Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00
Lindemans Padthaway Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£7–10
Loxton Lunchtime Light Chardonnay (4% vol)	12	£3.50
Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Semillon/ Chardonnay/Colombard 1999	15	£5.00

BULGARIAN RED

Boyar Merlot 1999	15	£3.50

Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Somerfield 13.5 £2.50

Bulgarian Country Red NV, Somerfield 14 £3.50

BULGARIAN WHITE

Bulgarian Chardonnay 1998, Somerfield 14 £3.50

Bulgarian Country White 1999, Somerfield 14.5 £3.50

CHILEAN RED

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Vina La Rosa 1999, Somerfield 16.5 £5.00

Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot Vina La Rosa 1999, Somerfield 16.5 £3.00

Chilean Merlot 1999, Somerfield 17 £5.00

Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1998 17 £5–7

Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1999 16 £5.00

Isla Negra Merlot 1999 16.5 £5–7

CHILEAN WHITE

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc, Canepa 1999, Somerfield 16 £5.00

Chilean Semillon Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 16 £3.00

Chilean White 1999, Somerfield 15.5 £3.50

Cono Sur Viognier 1999 16 £5.00

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1999 16.5 £5.00

Vina Morande Chilean Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield 15.5 £5.00

FRENCH RED

Buzet Cuvée 44 1997 15 £5.00

Cabernet Sauvignon d'Oc Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield 14 £3.50

Château Blanca, Bordeaux 1999 15.5 £5.00

Château Cazal Cuvée des Fees Vieilles Vignes, St Chinian 1998 16 £5–7

Château Plaisance, Montagne St Emilion 1996 15.5 £5–7

Château Valoussiere Coteaux de Languedoc 1997 16.5 £5.00

Château Verdignan Haut Medoc 1996 13.5 £10–13

Claret NV, Somerfield 13.5 £3.50

Corbieres Rouge Val d'Orbieu 1998, Somerfield 15 £3.50

Côtes du Rhône Villages 1999, Somerfield 14 £5.00

Côtes du Roussillon Rouge 1998, Somerfield 15 £3.50

Crozes Hermitage 1998 14.5 £5.00

Domaine de Bisconte Côtes du Roussillon 1998 15 £5.00

Domaine de Courtilles Côte 125 Corbieres 1998	15.5	£5–7
Domaine Haut St Georges Corbieres 1998	16	–£5.00
Domaine la Tuque Bel Air, Côtes de Castillon 1997	14	£5–7
Fitou Rocher d'Ambree 1998, Somerfield	14.5	–£5.00
Gouts et Couleurs Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998	16	–£5.00
Gouts et Couleurs Syrah Mourvedre VdP d'Oc 1999	16	–£5.00
Hautes Côtes de Beaune Rouge, G. Desire 1999	12	£5–7
James Herrick Cuvée Simone VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Medoc NV, Somerfield	13	–£5.00
Oak Aged Claret NV, Somerfield	15	–£5.00
Red Burgundy 1997, Somerfield	12	£5–7
Vacqueyras Côtes du Rhône 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Vacqueyras Domaine de la Soleiade 1998	15	–£5.00
VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardeche Rouge 1999, Somerfield	14	–£3.50
VdP des Côtes de Gascogne Rouge 1998, Somerfield	15	–£3.50
Winter Hill Rouge, VdP de l'Aude 1999	14	–£3.50
Brouilly Les Celliers de Bellevue 1998	12	£5–7

FRENCH WHITE

Anjou Blanc 1999, Somerfield	13.5	–£3.50
Bordeneuve Blanc VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999	13	–£3.00
Chablis 1998, Somerfield	14	£7–10
Chablis Premier Cru 1997	10	£10–13
Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999, Somerfield	14.5	–£5.00
Chardonnay VdP du Jardin de la France 1999	13	–£5.00
Domaine d' Arain Muscat de Frontignan (50cl)	16	–£5.00
Domaine du Bois Viognier VdP d'Oc, Maurel Vedeau 1998	16	–£5.00
Entre Deux Mers 1998, Somerfield	12	–£5.00
French Oak Aged Chardonnay, Domaine Ste Agathe 1998	16	£5–7
Gewürztraminer Caves de Turckheim 1999	16	£5–7
Gouts et Couleurs Chardonnay Viognier 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Gouts et Couleurs Cinsault Rosé 1999	14	–£5.00
Hautes Côtes de Beaune, Laboure Roi 1998	13	£5–7

James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999	16	£5.00
Laperouse Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1996	16.5	£5.00
Les Marionettes Marsanne VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	£5.00
Muscat de Frontignan NV (50 cl)	17	£5.00
Rivers Meet Sauvignon Semillon 1999	13	£5.00
Sancerre Domaine les Grands Groux 1999	13	£7.10
VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardeche Blanc 1999, Somerfield	14.5	£3.50
VdP du Comte du Tolosan, Les Chais Beaucarois 1998	14	£3.50
Vouvray 1997, Somerfield	14	£5.00
White Burgundy 1999, Somerfield	13.5	£5–7
Winter Hill White, VdP de l'Aude NV	14	£3.50

GERMAN WHITE

Baden Dry NV, Somerfield	13.5	£3.00
Hock NV, Somerfield	14.5	£2.50
Morio Muskat 1997	15	£3.50
Mosel Riesling Halbtrocken NV	14	£3.50
Niersteiner Spiegelberg 1999, Somerfield	13	£3.50
Rheingau Riesling 1996, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Rheinhessen Auslese 1997, Somerfield	14.5	£5.00
Rudesheimer Rosengarten NV, Somerfield	13.5	£3.50
St Johanner Abtey Kabinett NV, Somerfield	14	£3.50
St Ursula Dry Riesling NV	14	£5.00

GREEK WHITE

Samos Greek Muscat NV (half-bottle)	15.5	£3.50

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Castle Ridge Pinot Grigio, Neszmely 1999	14	£5.00
Castle Ridge Sauvignon Blanc 1999	14	£5.00

ITALIAN RED

Bright Brothers Roman Vines Negroamaro Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£5.00
Cabernet Sauvignon delle Venezie 1999, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Caramia Primitivo Barrique 1998	14	£5–7
Chianti Classico Conti Serristori 1998, Somerfield	13.5	£5–7
D'Istinto Sangiovese · Merlot 1998 (Sicily)	14	£5.00
L'Arco Cabernet Franc, Friuli 1998	14	£5.00

Marano Amarone della Valpolicella 1996	13.5	£10–13
Mimosa Maremma Sangiovese 1998	15	£5.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Riparosso Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1998	13	£5.00
Terrale, Primitivo di Puglia 1998, Somerfield	15	£5.00
Tre Uve Ultima, Madonna dei Miracoli 1998	15	£7–10
Trulli Chardonnay del Salento 1999	13	£5.00
Trulli Primitivo Salento 1998	14.5	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico Vigneti Casterna 1997	15.5	£5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Bright Brothers Greganico Chardonnay 1999 (Sicily)	13.5	£5.00
Bright Brothers Roman Vines Sicilian Barrel-fermented Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Chardonnay delle Venezie 1998, Somerfield	13.5	£5.00
D'Istinto Trebbiano Insolia 1998	10	£3.50
L'Arco Chardonnay 1998	16	£5.00
Marc Xero Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Sicilian White 1999, Somerfield	13.5	£3.50
Soave 1998, Somerfield	12.5	£3.50
Vino da Tavola Bianco NV, Somerfield	12	£3.50

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Coopers Creek Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999	13.5	£7–10
Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999	13.5	£6–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Bright Brothers Atlantic Vines Baga 1999	14	£5.00
Fiuza Bright Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14.5	£5.00
Portuguese Red NV, Somerfield	14	£3.50
Ramada Red 1999	13	£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Fiuza Bright Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Portuguese White 1999, Somerfield	13	£3.50

ROMANIAN RED

Pietroasa Young Vatted Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Bellingham Pinotage 1999	17	£5–7
Bush Vines Pinotage 1999, Somerfield	16	£5.00
Kumala Cinsault Pinotage 1999	15	£5.00
Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£7–10
South African Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Somerfield	16	£5.00
South African Cape Red 1999, Somerfield	15	£3.50
South African Cinsault Ruby Cabernet 1999, Somerfield	15	£5.00
South African Pinotage 1998, Somerfield	16.5	£5.00
Winds of Change Pinotage Cabernet 1998	16	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Bellingham Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5.00
Bush Vines Semillon 1999, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Kumala Sauvignon Blanc/Colombard 1999	15.5	£5.00
Millennium Early Release Chenin Blanc 2000	14	£3.50
South African Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield	14	£5.00
South African Colombard 1999, Somerfield	14.5	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Bodegas Castano Monastrell Merlot 1999	16.5	£5.00
Bright Brothers Old Vines Navarra Garnacha 1998	14	£5.00
Don Darias Red NV	15.5	£5.00
Pergola Tempranillo 1999, Somerfield	15	£5.00
Rioja Crianza 1997, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Sierra Alta Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5.00
Valencia Red NV, Somerfield	14	£3.50

SPANISH WHITE

Castillo Imperial Blanco NV, Somerfield	13.5	£3.50
Don Darias White NV	14	£5.00
Muscatel de Valencia, Somerfield	16	£3.50
Pergola Oaked Viura 1999, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Vina Cana Rioja Blanco 1998, Somerfield	12.5	£5.00

URUGUAYAN RED

Bright Brothers Tannat Cabernet Franc 2000	16	£5.00
Bright Brothers Uruguayan Sauvignon/ Semillon 2000	15.5	£5.00

USA RED

Californian Dry Red NV, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Laguna Canyon Zinfandel 1998	12	£5.00
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7

USA WHITE

Talus Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7

FORTIFIED WINES

Amontillado Sherry, Somerfield	17.5	£5.00
Cream Sherry, Somerfield	16	£5.00
Fino Sherry, Somerfield	16	£5.00
Manzanilla Sherry, Somerfield	16	£5.00

SPARKLING WINES

Asti Spumante NV, Somerfield	14	£5–7
Australian Quality Sparkling NV, Somerfield	14	£5–7
Australian Sparkling Chardonnay 1995, Somerfield	14	£5–7
Cava Brut NV, Somerfield	14.5	£5.00
Cava Rosado NV, Somerfield	14	£5.00
Cremant de Bourgogne, Caves de Bailly 1998, Somerfield	13.5	£5–7
Devauzelle Champagne NV	13.5	£10–13
Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand)	14	£7–10
Millennium Champagne 1990, Somerfield	13	£13–20
Moscato Fizz, Somerfield	14	£2.50
Mumm Cuvée Napa Brut NV (California)	14	£7–10
Nicolas Feuillate Brut Premier Cru NV	14	£13–20
Nottage Hill Sparkling Chardonnay	14.5	£5–7
Pierre Larousse Chardonnay Brut NV (France)	16	£5.00
Prince William Blanc de Blancs Champagne NV, Somerfield	13.5	£13–20
Prince William Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Somerfield	14	£10–13
Prince William Champagne 1er Cru, Somerfield	15.5	£13–20
Prince William Champagne Rosé NV, Somerfield	13	£13–20
Prince William Millennium Champagne 1990, Somerfield	13	£13–20
Seaview Brut Rosé	13.5	£5–7

Seaview Pinot Noir/ Chardonnay 1995 (Australia) 15 £7-10

Vintage Cava 1996, Somerfield 15.5 £5-7

South African Sparkling Sauvignon, Somerfield 16 £5-7

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

SPAR

What has been happening over the past year at this retailer? Nothing to set the world alight? Well, let's see.

In July 1999 there were the thrills attached to the report of its considering 24-hour opening for its off licences on Millennium Eve. Wow, thought I! Same month, it said it was spending £2 million on advertising. (About what Tesco spends a week? Something like that.)

Things hotted up in September when eight Spar outlets in Aberdeen had to shut their off-licences after the group failed to inform licensing authorities of changes of the names of licensees Staff promotions had led to new store managers being put in place, but someone forgot to inform the local magistrates. Spar does, in fact, claim to have more off-licences than any other retail group, so it's quite understandable if small admin details are overlooked. It was later reported in the Aberdeen press that all the Spar branches, to great local relief, had regained their licences.

Spar likes Scotland. It intends, so it said, to consolidate its position north of the border with a spate of new store openings before the end of 1999. It plans to increase its share of the Scottish convenience market from 42% to 50% in that time. The group predicted £2 billion-worth of sales for its UK operations in the year 2000.

This was the year it announced the arrival of the Eurospar supermarket format. The stores (of about 5,000 square feet) are widely used by Inter national Spar on the Continent The first UK Eurospar opened in Warren Point in Belfast (operated by Spar wholesaler John Henderson).

It is at this point that I am required to explain that Spar, which you see all over Europe, is not so much a store chain as an international franchise Stores are owned by individuals, not the group It is only the buying which is centrally controlled, which is posited on the basis that this helps these individuals, as Spar franchisees, to compete with the prices in supermarkets. They don't, of course, and they can't A £2.29 wine bargain at Spar is an impossibility. A drinkable one, that is.

This requires of Spar that it offers new ideas and services to its customers, and in all the Spar stores I've visited in the past year I've been struck by the modernity of the layout and the eagerness of the staff to help. This should

be greatly enhanced in the future if Spar's plans for in-store banking in rural areas become a reality. At a time when certain clearing banks are attracting a lot of adverse publicity for closing smaller branches, the idea of banking at Spar is quite brilliant.

However, the biggest benefit as far as wine drinkers are concerned would be for Spar's wine buyer, Liz Aked, to have an even playing field to compete on. By this I mean that Spar shops are not compelled to take the wines she so assiduously tracks down and offers to the Spar wholesalers who trade with these shops. Spar shops can buy their wines elsewhere and many do, though there would be hugely communal benefits if all Spar shops had the same wines

It would help if the Spar shops were offered a continuing flow of great bargains at £3 50 and under, but this is Spar's great area of weakness. As the following ratings show, there are few decently rated wines at this price point, yet this is surely the one where the competition is hottest. The me-too initiatives (if that isn't a contradiction) like Spar's Party Wines and Pasta Wine (echoing Tesco and Morrisons) are fine if the wines are superbly fruity, work well within the context of their labels, and are darned cheap. I do not find the crucial first two of these constraints to have been met, and the third is debatable.

One reason for the all-round higher pricing at Spar is because Spar has to trade with wholesalers who then trade with the individual franchisees. This inevitably, unlike a supermarket, involves two further tiers of profit-taking.

Spar, then, can never compete with supermarkets, yet it could, I feel, concentrate on the £3.99/£4.29 sector but with a far greater array of wines of genuine interest and fruitiness. There are some, notably from southern France, but the dynamic wineries capable of supplying such wines have more important customers than Spar, and these are inevitably the supermarkets. Thus, Spar is doomed for ever to be the poor relation in this regard Liz, who must bite her lips in frustration at times, cannot even deal in last minute bargains or buy in large one-off amounts of cut price wine, for she cannot be guaranteed that the shops would take the wine, nor could she build in sufficient margin to convey profit to everyone involved.

Spar's professed commitment, therefore, to the local community, as exemplified by its 'Keep It Local' campaign, the aim of which is 'to fight back against the destruction of the local community, highlight the plight of the small businessman and keep local shops and businesses open for the local customer', has immense internal contradictions which frustrate its success. Where wine is concerned, these problems are nigh insoluble.

I heartily approve of Spar's drive to expand its network (of 2,700 UK stores) and to provide 'additional services such as post offices and chemists' as well as such things as the rural banking facilities mentioned earlier.

If only, however, there were solid ranges of £3 to £4 wines, outstandingly fruity and rich and food friendly, which ensured that customers made these a compelling reason to visit a Spar shop rather than simply picking up some wine because they happen to be on the premises – then Spar could become a real force in UK wine retailing.

I became interested in Spar because a few *Guardian* readers wrote and told me they found such shops useful for picking up the odd bottle to bring along to friends' suppers. This was before the supermarkets opened at all hours and before people cottoned on to the idea that they ought to buy wine for the month ahead rather than just stocking up for the weekend If there were many more great bottles on Spar's shelves, like some of the high-rating southern French reds I have found (all worth a detour to find, I might add), then this retailer would have more competitive presence

As a group, not just as wine departments, Spar might find it useful to devote more senior managerial time to solving this problem. Because if it can solve it, then many of the group's other ambitions would be more smoothly realisable. I wish them, and Liz, all the luck in the world

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webside under construction at time of going to press

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Shiraz Cabernet 1998, Spar	13.5	£5.00
Hardys Bankside Shiraz 1997	16.5	£7.10

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Australian Semillon Chardonnay 1999, Spar	16	£5.00
Burraburra Hill Chardonnay 1999, Spar	15.5	£5.00
Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00

BULGARIAN RED

Bulgarian Country Wine Cabernet Sauvignon & Merlot NV, Spar	13	£3.50

BULGARIAN WHITE

Bulgarian Country White NV, Spar	11	£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Canepa Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Spar	10	£5.00
Canepa Merlot 1998, Spar	13	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

Canepa Chilean Chardonnay 1999, Spar	14.5	£5.00
Canepa Chilean Sauvignon Blanc 1998, Spar	12	£5.00
Chilean Sauvignon Blanc 1998	15.5	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Claret NV, Spar	15	£5.00
Cordier Château Le Cadet de Martinens, Margaux 1995	13.5	£7–10
Coteaux du Languedoc NV	13	£3.50
Côtes du Ventoux Le Rossignol, Spar 1998	15.5	£5.00
Fitou NV, Spar	16	£5.00
French Country VdP de l'Herault NV, Spar (1 litre)	13	£3.50
Gevrey-Chambertin Les Caves des Hautes Côtes 1994	12	£13–20
Hautes Côtes de Beaune 1995, Spar	10	£5–7
La Côte Syrah Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar	13.5	£5.00
Lussac St Emilion 1997	11	£5–7
Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar	15.5	£5.00
Salaison Shiraz/Cabernet VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar	15.5	£5.00
Vin de Pays de l'Aude NV, Spar	12	£3.50

FRENCH WHITE

Chablis La Chablisienne 1998, Spar	14	£7–10
French Country VdP de l'Herault White NV	13	£5.00
Grenache VdP d'Oc NV	10	£3.50
La Côte Chasan Chardonnay 1999	13	£5.00
Muscat de St Jean de Minervois, Spar (half-bottle)	15.5	£3.50
Oaked Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998, Spar	12.5	£5.00
Pouilly Fuisse Les Vercheres Chardonnay 1996, Spar	10	£10–13
Salaison Chardonnay Sauvignon 1998, Spar	15	£3.00

Sancerre Saget 1998	10	£7–10
Unoaked Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999, Spar	14	–£5 00
Vin de Pays de l'Aude Blanc NV, Spar	12	–£3 50
White Burgundy Chardonnay 1996, Spar	13	£5–7

GERMAN WHITE

Grans Fassian Riesling 1995	16	£5–7

HUNGARIAN RED

Misty Mountain Merlot NV, Spar	13	–£5 00

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Misty Mountain Chardonnay NV, Spar	13	–£5.00

ITALIAN RED

Barolo 'Costa di Bussia' 1994	16	£13–20
Chianti Chiantigiane 1997, Spar	12	£5 00
Chianti Classico Le Fioraie 1995	11	£7–10
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 1999, Spar	14	–£5 00
Pasta Red NV, Spar (1 litre)	11	–£3.50
Riva Red NV, Spar	13.5	–£3 50

ITALIAN WHITE

Pasta White NV, Spar (1 litre)	13	–£3.50
Riva White NV, Spar	14.5	–£3.50

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Chiwara Cinsault/Ruby Cabernet 1998	13	£5 00
Chiwara Pinotage 1998, Spar	14.5	–£5 00
Chiwara Ruby Cabernet/ Pinotage 1998, Spar	11	–£5 00
Table Mountain Pinot Noir NV	10	–£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Chiwara Colombard/ Sauvignon 1998, Spar	12.5	–£5 00
South African Classic Chardonnay 1998, Spar	12	£5–7

SPANISH RED

Perfect for Parties Red NV, Spar (1 litre)	10	–£3.50
Valencia Soft Red NV, Spar	14	–£3.50

SPANISH WHITE

Perfect for Parties White NV, Spar (1 litre)	10	–£3.50
Valencia Dry White NV, Spar	13.5	–£3.50

USA RED

Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 — 15.5 — £5–7

FORTIFIED WINES

Old Cellar LBV Port 1996, Spar — 14 — £7–10

Old Cellar Ruby Port NV, Spar — 14.5 — £5–7

SPARKLING WINES

Cava Brut NV, Spar — 15 — £5–7.00

Marques de Prevel Champagne NV, Spar — 10 — £13–20

TESCO

The fastest act in the west is Tesco. No retailer thinks faster on its feet, and none is more concerned to keep prices as low as humanly possible (in some cases inhumanly low, say its green eyed competitors). The wines and the ratings which follow speak for themselves. Tesco has an immense range of wines, would like to stock everything, has excellent own-label ranges at the cheaper end of the spectrum as well as some solid contenders priced more highly. Its wine department is efficient and widely spread (it exiled Phil Reedman to Australia, where he has a crucial role in coordinating, as product development manager, Tesco's myriad purchases of wine from this immensely ambitious island).

It is also tough (ruthless say its competitors), no-nonsense and highly focused It is, I think, the largest department of its kind, comprising managers, buyers, marketing and PR people whose roles, to the casual observer, seem to overlap, but at the last count there were Alex Austin, Kevin Smith, Charles Clowes and Eleanor Beatty buying, Lindsay Talas, Helen McGinn and Sara Pattinson product developing; Anne-Marie Bostock producing babies; and Sara Archer and Nicky Walden marketing and wine critic feather smoothing I can report the department for only one delicious bribe this year when Nicky sent me a packet of fudge (eight ounces). I devoured it in a single sitting and felt suitably corrupted. It rated 18 points out of 20.

In the ten years I have been writing the Superplonk column I would say the biggest change has been in the number of readers who shopped for wine at Sainsbury's who have now switched to Tesco. It can't just be the wine, of course. Tesco is innovative and dynamic in many areas.

For example, it was Tesco which launched in 1999 a pet insurance scheme in fifty of its stores. The insurance service (£7 for a dog, £4 for a cat) included a twenty-four-hour helpline and an emergency vet service

This was the month that reminiscences about Jack 'Slasher' Cohen, the founder of Tesco, were given prominence via Lord MacLaurin's memoirs melodramatically entitled *Tiger by the Tail*. Lord MacLaurin is an ex chairman of Tesco. One particular anecdote, surely apocryphal, concerned Slasher – so called because the man loved slashing prices – acquiring a consignment of tinned milk from stock that had run aground at sea. The

milk was sent to the stores with the following note: 'Managers are allowed to use Duraglit to remove the rust from the tins.'

Amiable nonsense, perhaps, but Tesco is deadly serious about maintaining a competitive edge with its prices. In 1999 it launched a price comparison website which allows customers to compare immediately prices on 1,000 lines at Tesco, Safeway, Sainsbury's and Asda. What a fantastic idea. Slasher was doubtless chortling with glee at that one, up there on his celestial cloud doing deals in second-hand harps.

Tesco also emerged as a really serious internationalist on several fronts. It trounced its competitors in the Hungarian hypermarket sector, expanding faster in the sector than its Euro-retailing rivals, Auchan and Cora, by employing Hungarians as departmental and store managers. Tesco (at time of report) had four hypermarkets in Hungary and had plans to open seven new stores in 2000 each at a cost of £15 million. Tesco is also active in Poland, and the Czech and Slovak Republics. According to the trade magazine *Supermarketing*, Tesco also gained a foothold in Trinidad. When offers are invited to set up a supermarket on the moon, you may be sure that Tesco will be the first to consider the practicalities.

On the other hand, it quietly withdraws from situations that don't add up. In 1999 it quit as a drinks specialist in Northern Ireland with the sale of its eighteen off-licences as well as two larger drinks stores.

The company patently takes account of differing national retail characteristics. It is, as far as I know, the only supermarket to appoint a marketing manager solely for Scotland, to take account of differing tastes north of the border. It announced, at the same time, plans for a massive 97,000-square-feet store in Glasgow.

Small wonder there was, with so much going on, speculation about a possible bid by Tesco for the troubled M&S chain. Nothing came of this, as surely no informed observer thought there would.

The millennium got under way with plans to triple its home-shopping outlets, and Tesco Express added 150 forecourt sites to its growing portfolio. Tesco retained its position as the UK supermarket group 'receiving the most favourable press coverage', according to a report in *Supermarketing* The findings came from the second Food and Drug Retailers' Reputation Monthly.

Tesco was also reportedly bullish about opening stores in China, according to a report in *Retail Week*. It was also set to open its first 24-hour discount store in Bangkok. Tesco also launched its own credit card in Thailand (to increase 'brand awareness', it was said). Such initiatives are,

apparently, a vital step in gaining loyalty in emerging markets where it is difficult for consumers to get credit. If successful, Tesco may, apparently, introduce a similar scheme in central Europe.

Money is certainly on Tesco's mind right now. A few months back it announced that customers would soon be able to pay in cheques to their bank accounts at Tesco checkouts The scheme, which was piloted in 100 stores in July, could be rolled out nationally if successful. Holders of Tesco savings accounts and Clubcard Plus will also be able to pay in cheques; previously customers had only been able to pay in cheques at the personal finance kiosks in nine stores.

If I were running Barclays or one of the bigger bank/building societies, I'd take note of these initiatives The day can't be far off when Tesco puts financial advisers in stores and starts to offer mortgages and savings accounts. If this were linked to Tesco share ownership in some ground-breaking way, it could produce a massive flood of retailer loyal new stock-holders It would represent cooperative retailing of a dynamic new kind altogether. (So the Co operative movement needs to consider such ideas as well.)

Indeed, the only retailer which doesn't appear concerned at Tesco's competitiveness and eager ideas is Wal Mart. But then they haven't been around long enough to know the scene. Certainly many of Tesco's ideas, both big and small, are scrutinised by rivals and often shamelessly pinched One such is the Tesco's Finest neck label which has been appearing on selected wine bottles over the past year. This does nothing more than 'halo' a wine, yet on some lines the increase in sales has been phenomenal. An unbelievable 7,000% increase in sales, so I learned, occurred on one German wine which was neck-labelled Tesco's Finest, and on other lines, like the superb own-label Gewürztraminer, the increase in sales has been a more modest, but still dramatic, 400%.

Patently, Tesco customers trust the store. It is now expected that Tesco's competitors will follow this neck-label idea, and already I hear rumours that Sainsbury's is experimenting with a similar idea.

Tesco has now achieved an aloofness from its rivals which was once the preserve of Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer. Part of the inheritance which comes with this air of disdain of the top dog is to ignore com petitors rather than publicly knocking them. I never hear of Tesco slagging a rival off or saying nasty things about another supermarket, even in private. The company merely gets on with delivering the goods, minding its own business. Possibly it follows the precept of the Roman emperor Marcus

Aurelius that 'the noblest form of retribution is not to become like your enemy'.

Only accidental knocks, it would appear, occur. I learned from the invaluable *Retail Week* magazine that a Tesco Direct van delivering to the house of Steven Round, an executive at Woolworths/Kingfisher, rammed into Mr Round's car, causing a certain amount of damage. But then I'm told that Tesco now has 500,000 customers using Tesco Direct services via the Internet, so the odd scrape is perhaps inevitable

Personally, though, I prefer trundling my own trolley round a Tesco store, and I especially like the smiling faces wandering up and down the wine aisles. These belong to the customers who find the range huge, the bargains many, and the opportunities to find something individual (but not expensive) irresistible.

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EN8 9SL

Tel 0800 505555 Customer Careline
www.tesco.co.uk

ARGENTINIAN RED

Anubis Tempranillo 1999	16	£5–7
Argentinian Bonarda/ Barbera 1999, Tesco	14	–£3.50
Argento Malbec 1999	16.5	–£5.00
Bright Brothers Barrica Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah 1998	15	£5–7
Bright Brothers Barrica Reserve Syrah 1998	16	£5–7
Bright Brothers San Juan Reserve Cabernet/Shiraz 1998	14	£5 00
Bright Brothers San Juan Reserve Shiraz 1998	14 5	– £5 00
Catena Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	17	£7–10
Monster Spicy Red Syrah, Tesco	16	–£5.00
Picajuan Peak Bonarda NV	15 5	£5 00
Picajuan Peak Malbec 1999, Tesco	14.5	–£5.00
Picajuan Peak Sangiovese 1998, Tesco	16	–£5.00
'Q' Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	17	£7–10

Q Tempranillo 1998	16.5	£7–10
Santa Julia Oaked Tempranillo 1997	16	£5.00

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Argentinian Torrontes 1999, Tesco	13	£3.50
Argento Chardonnay 1999	17	£5.00
Picajuan Peak Viognier 1999	15	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Australian Cabernet/ Merlot NV, Tesco	14	£5.00
Australian Red, Tesco	14	£3.50
Australian Ruby Cabernet, Tesco	14	£5.00
Australian Shiraz NV, Tesco	13	£5.00
Australian Shiraz/ Cabernet NV, Tesco	14	£5.00
Banrock Station Shiraz 1999	13	£5–7
Banrock Station Shiraz/ Mataro 1999	15	£5.00
Barramundi Shiraz/ Merlot NV	15.5	£5.00
Best's Great Westner Dolcetto 1998	15.5	£5–7
Blue Pyrenees Estate Red 1996	14	£10–13
Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999	13.5	£5–7
Buckleys Grenache/ Shiraz/Mourvedre 1998	14	£7–10
Chapel Hill Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	14	£7–10
Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Tesco	16	£5–7
Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/ Shiraz 1999	16.5	£5–7
Lindemans Bin 50 Shiraz 1998	14.5	£5–7
Lindemans Cawarra Shiraz/Cabernet 1999	14	£5.00
McLaren Vale Grenache 1998, Tesco	13.5	£5–7
McLaren Vale Shiraz 1997, Tesco	14	£5–7
Miranda 'Left Field' Tinta Cao 1998	13	£5.00
Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	13.5	£5–7
Penfold Koonunga Hill Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1999	15	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1999	15.5	£5–7
Rosemount Shiraz 1998	15.5	£7–10
Sunstone Fresh Spicy Red NV	12	£5.00
Temple Bruer Cornucopia Grenache 1997	14	£5–7
Tim Adams Shiraz 1997	14.5	£7–10

Woolpunda Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 — 15 — £5.00

Woolpunda Shiraz 1998 — 16 — £5.00

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Australian Chardonnay, Tesco — 16 — £3.50

Banrock Station Chardonnay 1999 — 14 — £5.00

Barramundi Semillon/Chardonnay NV — 16 — £5.00

Blue Pyrenees Estate Chardonnay 1997 — 16.5 — £10–13

Blues Point Semillon/Chardonnay 1998 — 12.5 — £5–7

Brown Brothers Dry Muscat 1999 — 15 — £5–7

Chapel Hill Unwooded Chardonnay 1998 — 15.5 — £5–7

Clare Valley Riesling 1999, Tesco — 15.5 — £5.00

Geoff Merrill Chardonnay Reserve 1995 — 14 — £7–10

Hardys Grenache/Shiraz Rosé 1999 — 14 — £5.00

Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon 1999 — 15 — £5.00

Hunter Valley Semillon 1999, Tesco — 13.5 — £5–7

Jacobs Creek Dry Riesling 2000 — 14 — £5.00

Langhorne Creek Verdelho 1998, Tesco — 15.5 — £5.00

Limited Release Barramundi Marsanne 1998 — 16.5 — £5–7

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 1999 — 16.5 — £5.00

Lindemans Cawarra Chardonnay 1999 — 15.5 — £5.00

McLaren Vale Chardonnay 1999, Tesco — 15 — £5–7

Miranda White Pointer 1999 — 15 — £5.00

Mount Pleasant Elizabeth Semillon 1994 — 15.5 — £7–10

Ninth Island Chardonnay 1998 — 14 — £7–10

Normans Unwooded Chardonnay 1999 — 16.5 — £5.00

Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999 — 15 — £5.00

Pendulum Chardonnay 1999 — 15 — £5.00

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999 — 16 — £5–7

Pewsey Vale Eden Valley Riesling 1999 — 15.5 — £5–7

Provenance Chardonnay 1997 — 13.5 — £10–13

Rosemount Chardonnay 1999 — 16 — £5–7

Rosemount Sauvignon Blanc 2000 — 15 — £5–7

Rosemount Semillon/Sauvignon 1999 — 14 — £5–7

Smithbrook Chardonnay 1998 — 15 — £7–10

Smooth Voluptuous White NV, Tesco	15	~£5.00
St Hallett Poachers Blend 1998	16	~£5.00
Tasmanian Chardonnay 1999, Tesco	13	£5–7
Tim Adams Riesling 1998	16	£7–10
Woolpunda Blue Rock Chardonnay 1998	15.5	~£5.00
Yendah Vale Chardonnay/Merlot Rosé 1999	12	~£5.00

AUSTRIAN RED

Blauer Zweigelt Lenz Moser 1997	14.5	~£5.00
Lenz Moser's Prestige Beerenauslese 1995 (half-bottle)	15	£5–7

BULGARIAN RED

Azbuka Cabernet Sauvignon 1994	14	£5–7
Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1995, Tesco	14	~£5.00
Reka Valley Bulgarian Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Tesco	14.5	~£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Altum Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1997	14	£7.10
Altum Merlot Reserve 1997	14	£7–10
Canepa Zinfandel 1998	14	~£5.00
Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Tesco	16	~£5.00
Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1999, Tesco	16	~£5.00
Chilean Merlot Reserve 1999, Tesco	16	~£5.00
Chilean Red NV, Tesco	15	~£3.50
Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1999	16	~£5.00
Cono Sur Pinot Noir Reserve 1996	14	£5–7
Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva 1998	16.5	£7–10
Errazuriz Merlot 1999	16.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Syrah Reserva 1998	16	£7–10
Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	~£5.00
Isla Negra Merlot 1999	16.5	£5–7
Mont Gras Quatro 1998	15	£5–7
Montgras Merlot 1998	16	~£5.00
Salsa Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	14	~£5.00
Santa Catalina Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15.5	~£5.00
Santa Catalina Merlot 1999	16	~£5.00
Santa Ines Cabernet/ Carmenere Reserva, Legado de Armida 1999	17.5	£5–7
Santa Ines Cabernet/ Merlot 1998	16	~£5.00
Stowells Chilean Cabernet/Merlot NV	14.5	~£5.00

TerraMater Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	–£5.00
Undurraga Familia Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	14	£7–10
Undurraga Pinot Noir 1999	13	–£5.00
Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1997	17.5	£7–10
Valdivieso Carignan 1999	16	–£5.00
Valdivieso Malbec Reserve 1997	16.5	£7–10

CHILEAN WHITE

Chilean Chardonnay Reserve 1998, Tesco	15.5	–£5.00
Chilean Chardonnay, Tesco	14	–£3.00
Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV, Tesco	14.5	–£5.00
Chilean White NV, Tesco	14.5	–£5.00
Cono Sur Gewürztraminer 1999	16	–£5.00
Errazuriz Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Errazuriz Chardonnay Reserva 1997	16	£7–10
Santa Ines Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5.00
Stowells Chilean Sauvignon Blanc NV	12	–£5.00
TerraMater Chardonnay 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Undurraga Chardonnay/ Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	–£5.00
Undurraga Gewürztraminer 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Vina Casablanca Santa Isabel Sauvignon Blanc 1998	16	£5–7

ENGLISH WHITE

Chapel Down Bacchus 1997	12	–£5.00
Chapel Down Summerhill Oaked NV	12	–£5.00

FRENCH RED

Beaujolais NV, Tesco	11	£3.50
Beaujolais Villages 1999, Tesco	12	–£5.00
Burgundy Pinot Noir 1998, Tesco	13.5	£5–7
Buzet Cuvée 44 1997	15	–£5.00
Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc NV, Tesco	14	–£3.50
Chartron la Fleur Château La Grave Bordeaux 1997	13	£5.00
Château Clement Pichon, Cru Bourgeois Haut Medoc 1996	13	£13–20
Château de Côte de Montpezat, Côtes de Castillon 1997	15.5	£5–7
Château de Goelane Bordeaux Superieur 1997	13	£5–7
Château Ginestiere Coteaux du Languedoc 1997	15.5	–£5.00

Château Haut-Chaigneau Lalande de Pomerol 1996	14	£13–20
Château la Fleur Bellevue Premieres Côtes de Blaye 1998	14	£5–7
Château La Raze Beauvalet Haut Medoc 1997	14	£5–7
Château la Tour de Mons Bordeaux 1996	13 5	£13–20
Château Lafarque Pessac Leognan 1996	12	£13–20
Château Liliane-Ladouys Cru Bourgeois Superieur Saint-Estephe 1996	12	£13–20
Château Maucaillou, Cru Bourgeois Moulis en Medoc 1996	12	£20+
Château Maurel Fonsalade, St Chinian 1997	14.5	£5.00
Château Tour de l'Esperance Bordeaux Superieur 1997	16	£5.00
Claret, Tesco	12 5	£3 50
Clarity Bordeaux Rouge 1998	14	£5 00
Corbieres NV, Tesco	13 5	£3 50
Corbieres Reserve La Sansoure 1999, Tesco	15	£5 00
Côte Rotie Guigal 1996	12	£20+
Côtes du Rhône NV, Tesco	13 5	£3 50
Côtes du Rhône Villages Domaine de la Grande Retour 1999, Tesco	14	£5.00
Dark Horse Barrique Aged Cahors 1998	14	£5.00
Domaine du Soleil Syrah/Malbec VdP d'Oc NV	14 5	£5.00
Fitou NV, Tesco	14 5	£3 50
Fitou Reserve Baron de la Tour NV, Tesco	15 5	£5.00
French Grenache Prestige, Tesco	14 5	£5.00
French Grenache, Tesco	14	£3.50
French Merlot VdP d'Oc NV, Tesco	14 5	£3.50
Gamay, Tesco	10	£3.50
Gevrey Chambertin 1997	12	£13–20
Gouts et Couleurs Premium Cuvée Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£5.00
Graves 1996, Tesco	14	£7 10
Les Etoiles French Organic Red Wine NV	13	£5 00
Louis Jadot Combe aux Jacques Beaujolais Villages 1998	13	£5–7
Margaux 1997, Tesco	12	£7–10
Medoc 1997, Tesco	13	£5.00
Minervois NV, Tesco	14	£3.50
Nuits St Georges, Les Chezeaux 1996	13	£13–20
Oak Aged Red Burgundy 1998, Tesco	13 5	£5–7
Oaked Côtes du Rhône NV	13.5	£5 00

Pommard 1er Cru, Clos des Verger 1996	13.5	£13–20
Rasteau Côtes du Rhône Villages 1998	16.5	–£5.00
St Emilion 1997, Tesco	12.5	£7–10
Syrah VdP d'Oc, Tesco	13.5	–£3.50
Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic)	16.5	£5–7
Yvecourt Claret Bordeaux 1998	12	–£5.00

FRENCH WHITE

Alsace Gewürztraminer 1998, Tesco	16	£5–7
Alsace Riesling 1998, Tesco	14	£5–7
Anjou Blanc NV, Tesco	13	–£3.50
Barrique Aged Marsanne Roussanne VdP d'Oc 1998	15.5	–£5.00
Cabernet de Saumur Rosé NV, Tesco	14.5	–£5.00
Celsius Dry Muscat 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Chablis 1998, Tesco	12.5	£5–7
Coteaux du Layon Saint-Aubin Domaine Cady 1996	16	£5–7
Côtes du Rhône Blanc NV, Tesco	15	–£3.50
Domaine Cazal Viel Viognier 1999	16	£5–7
Domaine de Montauberon Marsanne 1998	12	–£5.00
Domaine du Soleil Chardonnay VdP d'Oc NV	14	–£5.00
Domaine du Soleil Sauvignon/Chardonnay VdP d'Oc NV	14	–£5.00
Entre Deux Mers NV, Tesco	13.5	–£5.00
French Chardonnay NV, Tesco	13.5	–£3.50
French Chenin Blanc NV, Tesco	14.5	–£3.50
French Viognier VdP d'Oc 1999, Tesco	15	–£5.00
Gaston d'Orleans Vouvray Demi Sec 1998	12	£5–7
James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	–£5.00
Les Estoiles Organic Chardonnay/Chenin VdP d'Oc NV	13.5	–£5.00
Les Quatre Clochers Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7
Macon Blanc Villages 1998, Tesco	11	£5.00
Meursault 1er Cru Les Genevrieres 1988	10	£20+
Montagny Oak Aged 1997	13.5	£7–10
Muscadet NV, Tesco	13.5	£3.50
Muscadet Sur Lie 1999, Tesco	13	–£5.00
Oak Aged White Burgundy 1998, Tesco	13.5	£5–7
Pouilly Fuisse Louis Jadot 1998	11	£10–13

Pouilly Fume Cuvée Jules 1998	13	£7–10
Sancerre 1999, Tesco	10	£5–7
Vouvray, Tesco	12	£5.00
White Burgundy 1999, Tesco	12	£5.00

GERMAN WHITE

Carl Erhard Rheingau Riesling 1999	14	£5.00
Devil's Rock Riesling 1998	14	£5.00
Fire Mountain Riesling 1997	13.5	£5.00
Grans Fassian Trittenheimer Riesling Spatlese 1997	14	£7–10
Kendermans Dry Riesling 1999	13	£5.00
Liebfraumilch, Tesco	12	£3.50
Steinweiler Kloster Liebfrauenberg Kabinett, Tesco	14	£5.00
Steinweiler Kloster Liebfrauenberg Spatlese, Tesco	13	£5.00
Villa Baden Chasselas 1998	12	£5.00

GREEK RED

Grande Reserve Naoussa 1995	13.5	£5–7
Greek Red Wine 1999, Tesco	15	£5.00

GREEK WHITE

Greek White Wine 1999, Tesco	14	£5.00
Santorini Dry White 1999	13.5	£5.00

HUNGARIAN RED

Chapel Hill Barrique Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15	£5.00
Reka Valley Hungarian Merlot, Tesco	13	£3.50

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Chapel Hill Pinot Noir Rosé 1998	15	£3.50
Emerald Hungarian Sauvignon Blanc 1999	14	£5.00
Hungarian Oaked Chardonnay NV, Tesco	12	£5.00
Hungarian Oaked Chardonnay Reserve 1999, Tesco	13.5	£5.00
Nagyrede Estate Barrel Aged Pinot Grigio/Zenit 1998	16	£5.00
Reka Valley Chardonnay NV, Tesco	12	£3.50
Tokaiji Aszu 1990	16	£7–10

ITALIAN RED

Barbera d'Asti Calissano 1997	13.5	£5.00
Barolo Vigna dei Pola 1995	14	£13–20
Chianti 1998, Tesco	13	£3.50

L'Arco Cabernet Franc, Friuli 1998	14	£5.00
Melini Chianti 1998	14	£5.00
Merlot del Piave NV, Tesco	11	£5.00
Moncaro Sangiovese 1999	13	£3.50
Monte d'Abro Montepulciano Abruzzo 1999	14	£5.00
Pendulum Zinfandel 1999	15.5	£5.00
Pinot Noir del Veneto NV, Tesco	11	£5.00
Sicilian Red NV, Tesco	11	£3.50
Taruso Ripassato Valpolicella Valpentena 1997	16.5	£5.7
Terra Viva Vino da Tavola Organic Red	13.5	£5.00
Trulli Primitivo Salento 1998	14.5	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico 1999, Tesco	13	£5.00
Villa Pigna Rosso Piceno 1998	14	£5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Antinori Orvieto Classico Secco 1999	13	£5.00
Asti NV, Tesco	13	£5.00
Elegant Crisp White 1999, Tesco	13.5	£5.00
Frascati 1999, Tesco	14	£3.50
La Gioiosa Pinot Grigio 1999	13.5	£5.00
Orvieto Classico Abbocato 1999, Tesco	13.5	£5.00
Soave Classico 1998, Tesco	14.5	£5.00
Trulli Dry Muscat 1999	13.5	£5.00
Verdicchio Classico 1999, Tesco	14	£5.00
Villa del Borgo Pinot Grigio 1999	14	£5.00

MEXICAN RED

Mexican Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Tesco	13	£5.00

MEXICAN WHITE

Mexican Chardonnay 1999, Tesco	15	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Babich Winemaker's Reserve Syrah 1998	15	£7–10
Montana Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998	16	£5–7
Montana Reserve Merlot 1998	16.5	£7–10
Montana Reserve Pinot Noir 1998	12	£7–10
New Zealand Cabernet Sauvignon NV, Tesco	13.5	£5.00
Waimanu Red 1998	13	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Azure Bay Chardonnay/ Semillon 1999	13	£5.00
Cooks Chardonnay, Gisborne 1998	13	£5–7
Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£7–10
Lawsons Dry Hills Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£7–10
Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1999	17	£7–10
Montana Riesling 1999	16	£5.00
Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5–7
New Zealand Dry White, Tesco	13.5	£5.00
New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc 1998, Tesco	13.5	£5.00
Stoneleigh Chardonnay 1997	15.5	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Alianca Particular Palmela 1995	17	£5–7
Bela Fonte Baga 1998	14	£5.00
Dao, Tesco 1998	14	£5.00
Dom Ferraz Bairrada 1997	16	£5.00
Dom Ferraz Dao 1997	15	£5.00
Portuguese Red NV, Tesco	14.5	£3.50
Vinha Nove Tras-os-Montes 1998	15.5	£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Bela Fonte Bical 1998	15	£5.00
Dry Vinho Verde, Tesco	13.5	£5.00

ROMANIAN RED

Reka Valley Romanian Pinot Noir, Tesco	15.5	£3.50

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

African Legend Pinotage 1998	14	£5.00
Beyers Truter Pinotage 1998, Tesco	16.5	£5.00
Cape Cinsault NV, Tesco	15.5	£3.50
Cape Cinsault/Pinotage NV, Tesco	15.5	£5.00
Clos Malverne Pinotage 1999	16	£5–7
Diemersdal Shiraz 1998	15	£5–7
Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999	15.5	£5.00
Goiya Glaan 1999	15	£5.00
International Winemaker Cabernet/Merlot, Tesco	15	£5.00
Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz 1999	15	£5.00
Kumala Cinsault/ Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	13.5	£5.00
Landskroon Premier Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5–7
Long Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	13.5	£5.00

Oak Village Pinotage/ Merlot 1999	13	~£5.00
South African Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz 1999, Tesco	14	~£5.00
South African Red NV, Tesco	14.5	~£3.50
South African Reserve Cabernet NV, Tesco	12	~£5.00
Spice Route Andrew's Hope Merlot/Cabernet, Malmesbury 1998	16.5	£5–7
Spice Route Cabernet Merlot 1998	16.5	£7–10
Winds of Change Cabernet/Pinotage 1999	16	~£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

African Legend Colombard 1999	14	~£5.00
Arniston Bay Chenin/ Chardonnay 1999	13	~£5.00
Arniston Bay Rosé 2000	13	~£5.00
Boschendal Grande Cuvée Sauvignon Blanc 1998	13.5	£5–7
Cape Chenin Blanc NV, Tesco	15	~£3.50
Fairview Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7
Firefinch Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5.00
Goiya Kgeisje 2000	15	~£5.00
Kumala Colombard/ Chardonnay 1999	14.5	~£5.00
Oak Village Sauvignon Blanc 1999	13	~£5.00
Ryland's Grove Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 1999	16	~£5.00
Rylands Grove Dry Muscat 1999	13.5	£5.00
Rylands Grove Sauvignon Blanc 2000	14.5	~£5.00
South African Chardonnay/Colombard NV, Tesco	14	~£5.00
South African Medium Sweet White NV, Tesco	13	~£3.50
South African Reserve Chardonnay 1999, Tesco	13.5	~£5.00
South African White, Tesco	14	~£3.50
Spice Route Long Walk Sauvignon Blanc 1998	16	£5–7
Third Millennium Chenin Chardonnay 1999	13	~£5.00
Van Loveren Blanc de Noir Red Muscadel Rosé 2000	14	~£3.50

SOUTH AMERICAN RED

Two Tribes Red	13.5	~£5.00

SOUTH AMERICAN WHITE

Two Tribes White	13.5	~£5.00

SPANISH RED

Campillo Gran Reserva Rioja 1989	10	£13–20

Campillo Reserva Rioja 1995	13	£10–13
Carmesi Garnacha/Tempranillo Calatayud 1998	16	–£5.00
Don Darias NV	15.5	–£5.00
Espiral Moristel Tempranillo/Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5.00
Huge Juicy Red, Tesco	13.5	–£5.00
Marques de Chive Reserva 1994, Tesco	14.5	–£5.00
Marques de Chive Tempranillo NV, Tesco	15	£3.50
Marques de Grinon Rioja 1997	15	–£5.00
Muruve Crianza 1996	15.5	£5–7
Orobio Tempranillo Rioja 1998	13	£5–7
Piedmonte Merlot Tempranillo 1998	14	–£5.00
Priorat l'Agnet 1998	14	£5–7
Senorio de los Llanos Valdepeñas Gran Reserva 1994	14	–£5.00
Senorio de los Llanos Valdepeñas Reserva 1996	14	–£5.00
Vina Azbache Rioja 1998	15.5	–£5.00
Vina Mara Gran Reserva Rioja 1990, Tesco	13.5	£7.10
Vina Mara Rioja Alavesa 1998, Tesco	16	£5–7
Vina Mara Rioja Reserva 1995, Tesco	15	£7.10
Vina Mara Rioja, Tesco	14	£5.00
Vina Montana Monastrell/Merlot 1998	16	–£5.00

SPANISH WHITE

Moscatel de Valencia, Tesco	16	–£3.50

USA RED

California Old Vine Estate Carignane 1996	13.5	£5–7
Colombia Crest Côte de Colombia Grenache 1997	15	–£5.00
Edgewood Estate Napa Valley Malbec 1997	16	£10–13
Ehlers Grove Syrah 1998	13	£7–10
Mondavi Coastal Merlot 1997	16	£7–10
Robert Mondavi Coastal Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	14	£7–10
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5.7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7
West Coast Ruby Cabernet/Merlot 1999, Tesco	15	£5.00

USA WHITE

Fetzer Barrel Select Chardonnay 1997	15	£7.10
Fetzer Viognier 1999	15	£7–10
Hogue Chenin Blanc 1998	11	£5–7
West Coast California Chardonnay 1999, Tesco	14.5	–£5.00

FORTIFIED WINES

10 Year Old Tawny Port, Tesco	13.5	£10–13
Finest Madeira, Tesco	15.5	£7–10
Mick Morris Rutherglen Liqueur Muscat (half-bottle)	17	£5.00+
Superior Oloroso Seco, Tesco	16	£3.50+
Superior Palo Cortado, Tesco	16	£5.00+

SPARKLING WINES

Australian Sparkling Wine NV, Tesco	13	£5.00+
Blanc de Blancs Champagne NV, Tesco	13.5	£13–20
Blanc de Noirs Champagne NV, Tesco	14	£13–20
Cava NV, Tesco	15	£5.00+
Chapel Down Epoch Brut NV (England)	11	£5–7
Charles Duret Blanc de Blancs Brut NV	13	£5.00+
Charles Duret Blanc de Blancs Demi Sec NV	12	£5.00+
Cockatoo Ridge Black Sparkling NV	16.5	£7–10
Demi-Sec Champagne, Tesco	13	£10–13
Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay/ Pinot Noir Sparkling NV	14	£5–7
Hungarian Sparkling Chardonnay NV, Tesco	13.5	£5.00+
Jacob's Creek Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV (Australia)	15	£5–7
Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé Brut NV	11	£20+
Laurent-Perrier Vintage 1990	13	£20+
Les Etoiles Organic Sparkling Wine NV	12	£5–7
Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand)	14	£7–10
Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand)	16	£7–10
Moet Vintage 1993	13.5	£20+
Nicolas Feuillate Brut NV	13.5	£13–20
Pirie 1996	13	£13–20
Premier Cru Champagne Brut NV	15	£10–13
Rosé Cava NV, Tesco	15.5	£5.00+
South African Sparkling Sauvignon Blanc 1998, Tesco	14.5	£5.00+
Taittinger Champagne Brut NV	12	£20+
Valdivieso Sparkling Merlot 1998	16	£5–7
Veuve du Vernay Brut NV	14	£7–10

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

THRESHER/BOTTOMS UP/ WINE RACK/VICTORIA WINE – 1ST QUENCH

It used to be Ms Arabella Woodrow of the Co-op who was the one retail wine buyer with whom I could have an intelligent conversation about marathon running, but she has left and gone elsewhere. Luckily, however, I now have Jonathan Butt of 1st Quench, as the umbrella name of this massive retailer (2,600 shops) has it. Why 1st Quench? Not because of Jonathan's athletic prowess (he narrowly failed to win the millennium London Marathon only by some several thousand places), but because this astonishing hybrid, a coming together of many once competitive wine shops, is in love with acronyms.

Think of this. Qu – quality, en – enjoyment, ch – choice. No, I did not make this up I lack the talent. But someone who attended the Thresher and Victoria Wine marriage did. From this initial conjugal bliss, much has transpired.

At Christmas 1999 a company pay review was reported to have axed Victoria Wine employees' Christmas bonus of a week's extra pay. A new rewards and incentives scheme was being introduced, it was said, and the company announced that staff across the whole chain were now on an equal footing and on the same pay and bonus structure. The following month the retailer announced that a further 110 Victoria Wine and 70 Thresher outlets would close in the second round of its 'rationalisation programme', with job losses as high as 600 according to the union USDAW. This follows the 150 store closures announced at the beginning of 1999.

The company said that it was prepared to give stores earmarked for closure a second chance to show their worth after two stores were granted reprieves. The two stores (one in London and one in Somerset) were given a second chance after store managers convinced bosses they could reverse the stores' fortunes. In August 1999 another 180 stores were earmarked for closure. Later that year, 1st Quench launched its Alchemy at Work staff training and motivation programme designed to mould its workforce into

a 'formidable force in the market'. It was designed to encourage more than 18,000 shop staff to 'buy into the FQ vision, mission and values'. The company has now settled at around 2,675 outlets. Alchemy was a famous medieval wheeze, you will recall, aiming to persuade people that lead, and other base metals, could be changed into gold It remains to be seen whether FQ has, in this respect, succeeded where history reports nothing but failure.

Other high peaks were reached. In autumn 1999 seven VW and Thresher employees raised £12,500 for the Meningitis Trust after scaling the three highest mountains in England, Scotland and Wales More meaningfully for wine buyers, the company dispatched human resources staff to the shop floor. Thirty-eight head office personnel ended up working in stores to get an idea of the problems faced by shop staff Indeed, certain senior managers, including managing director Jerry Walton, actually worked in 1st Quench stores on New Year's Eve.

As the millennium celebrations abated, it was reported that a sale of 1st Quench, valued at around £300 million and jointly owned by Whitbread and Punch Taverns, was reportedly 'edging closer'. Possible future owners were conjectured to be the current management team or the Parisa group Mr Haghighi, who runs the latter retailer, said that the acquisition of FQ was something of a personal quest as he had entered the business as a sales assistant in a Thresher outlet. The *Sunday Telegraph* reported that 1st Quench was 'poised for a buyout'. I bet a professional wine trade watcher that it was all hot air and nothing would come of it. Nothing did (except I became ten quid richer). Finally, a Japanese bank, Nomura, bought 1st Quench.

Earlier this year, 1st Quench was said to be the subject of a BBC2 documentary called *Naked Work* which explored the ethos of management consultants. Other subjects were purported to be Amstrad and Cadbury-Schweppes. 1st Quench kept pretty quiet about this programme, if it ever went on air and I never managed to catch any of this series. About this time the managing director, Jerry Walton, and the finance director, Bob Warne, upped and left, for reasons I know not. Thresher's marvellous senior wine buyer, Kim Tidy, also left some time later to get involved in an e commerce venture.

But to counter such important defections the company announced that its In-house Wine Sales Advice Certificate had now been awarded to 2,000 members of staff. One reader, whose anonymity I shall respect, to whom I conveyed this information, replied 'so some of them have now learned how to say good morning and good afternoon'. Such cynics, some readers.

More thrilling, an ex-Thresher employee, Set Pavlou, aged twenty-nine,

sold his first screenplay to Hollywood and also wrote a novel which is also attracting interest from film companies. His movie, *The 51st State*, is being shot, mainly in Liverpool, and stars Samuel L. Jackson and Robert Carlyle. His sci-fi thriller, called *Decipher*, is due to be published in spring 2001 Mr Pavlou, so my assiduous research assistant informs me, once earned £3.55 an hour at Thresher. My research assistant, I should point out, earns a good deal more than that (but then he's far from full time).

In May 2000 a third round of store closures was deemed necessary. This third wave will result in a further 100 branches being shut down, bringing the total closures since the 1998 merger to 430. When the merger was first announced, the company said it would result in 300 store closures as an 'absolute maximum'.

Ah well, only another 2,600 or so branches to go. Let's hope the one you visit to unshelve any of the wines which follow is 1) still open, 2) run by a manager who is the proud possessor of a In-house Wine Sales Advice Certificate, and 3) has the wines you're interested in

The fact that I can guarantee none of those three things irritates me. I can feel Disgusted of Tonbridge already picking up his pen. If you could remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope, by the way, Mr Disgusted, it would mean I'd reply all the quicker

Thresher/Bottoms Up/Wine Rack/Victoria Wine
Enjoyment Hall
Bessemer Road
Welwyn Garden City
Herts
AL7 1BL

Tel 01707 385000 (1st Quench)
Fax 01707 385004
www.enjoyment.co.uk

ARGENTINIAN RED

Anubis Malbec 1999	16	~~£5.~~
Argento Malbec 1999	16.5	~~£5.00~~
Corazon Bonarda 1999	16	~~£5.00~~
Corazon Tempranillo 1999	16.5	~~£5.00~~
Libertad Malbec Bonarda 1999	15	~~£5.00~~
Libertad Malbec Sangiovese 1998	15	~~£5.00~~

Martins Andino Malbec Bonarda 1998	14	£5.00
Norton Privada 1998	16.5	£7–10
Q Tempranillo 1998	16.5	£7–10
Santa Julia Pinot Noir 1999	15.5	£5.00
Villa Atuel Syrah 1999	15.5	£5.00

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Corazon Pinot Gris 1999	15	£5.00
Correas Torrontes Chardonnay 1999	14	£5.00
Norton Semillon Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Norton Torrontes, Mendoza 1999	15.5	£5.00
Santa Julia Viognier 1999	17	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998	15.5	£5–7
Leasingham Domaine Cabernet/Malbec 1997	10	£7–10
Lindemans Padthaway Shiraz 1997	15.5	£7–10
Nanya Estate Malbec/ Ruby Cabernet 1998	10	£5.00
Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5–7
Oxford Landing Merlot 1999	14	£5–7
St Hallett Barossa Shiraz 1997	13	£7–10
Tatachilla Grenache Shiraz 1998	16	£5–7
Tollana Red, S E Australia NV	13.5	£5.00
Yalumba Bush Vine Grenache 1997	14	£7–10

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

David Traeger Verdelho, Victoria 1998	16	£7–10
Hardys Nottage Hill Riesling 1998	15.5	£5.00
Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£5.00
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999	15	£5.00
Pewsey Vale Riesling 1997	16	£5–7
Riddoch Coonawarra Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7
Samuels Bay Riesling, Eden Valley 1997	16	£5–7
Tollana Unoaked Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5.00

BULGARIAN RED

Copper Crossing Red NV	14	£3.50
Domaine Boyar Premium Oaked Cabernet Shumen 1997	13.5	£5.00
Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	14	£5.00
Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Merlot 1996	14.5	£5.00

BULGARIAN WHITE

Boyar Muskat & Ugni Blanc NV	11	£3.50
Copper Crossing Dry White NV	10	£3.50
Copper Crossing Medium White NV	12	£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Caliterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15.5	£5.00
Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16.5	£7–10
Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Merlot 1997	17.5	£10–13
Casa Lapostolle Merlot 1998	16.5	£5–7
Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£5.00
Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1998	16.5	£5.00
Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	17.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16	£7–10
Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15.5	£5–7
La Palmeria Cabernet/ Merlot 1998	16	£5.00
Las Colinas Cabernet Merlot 1999	15	£5.00
Las Colinas Chilean Red NV	13.5	£3.50
Las Colinas Merlot 1999	15	£5.00
Martins Don Rui Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13.5	£5–7
Santa Ines Legado de Armida Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1997	16.5	£5–7
Santa Ines Legardo de Armida Reserve Malbec 1997	16	£5–7
Valdivieso Malbec 1998	16	£5.00
Valdivieso Merlot 1999	15.5	£5.00
Valdivieso Reserve Pinot Noir 1996	14.5	£7–10
Veramonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16	£5–7
Veramonte Merlot 1997	14	£5–7

CHILEAN WHITE

Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc 1999	17	£5–7
Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Chardonnay 1997	17	£5.00
La Palmeria Chardonnay 1998	16	£5.00
Las Colinas Chardonnay 1999	15	£5.00
Las Colinas Riesling 1997	15.5	£5.00
Santa Ines Legardo de Armida Reserve Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7
Veramonte Chardonnay 1998	13.5	£5–7

FRENCH RED

Abbotts Cumulus Minervois 1998	14.5	£5–7
Beaujolais AC Regional Classics 1997	13.5	–£5.00
Beaujolais Villages Duboeuf 1997	13	£5–7
Château Sauvage Premier Côtes de Bordeaux 1997	13	£5–7
Château Suau, 1er Côtes de Bordeaux 1997 (unoaked)	13.5	£5–7
Claret Regional Classic, Sichel NV	14	–£5.00
Côtes de Beaune Villages 1996	12	£7–10
Côtes du Rhône Villages Les Faisans 1998	14	–£5.00
Dark Horse Cahors 1998	14	–£5.00
Domaine Peyrat Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15	£5–7
Fitou Terroir de Tuchan 1998	12	£7–10
Fleurie Georges Duboeuf 1998	11	£7–10
Fleurie Regional Classics 1998	13.5	£5–7
French Revolution Le Rouge 1999	16	–£5.00
La Ramillade Côtes du Rhône Rasteau 1997	16	£7–10
Morgon Domaine des Côtes de Douby 1998	13.5	£5–7
Old Bush Vines Carignan 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Pinot Noir, Louis Jadot 1998	12.5	£7–10
Sirius Red 1997	13.5	£5–7

FRENCH WHITE

Chablis Domaine de Bieville 1998	14	£7–10
Chablis Regional Classics 1997	13.5	£7–10
Chablis Vieilles Vignes, Defaix 1996	11	£10–13
Chablis Vieilles Vignes, La Cuvée Exceptionelle, Defaix 1997	12.5	£13–20
Château Filhot Sauternes 1990	15	£20+
Château Petit Moulin Blanc, Bordeaux 1998	12.5	£5–7
Domaine Pré Baron Sauvignon de Touraine 1998	14.5	£5–7
Domaine Tariquert Sauvignon Blanc 1999	14	£5–7
French Revolution Le Blanc 1999	13	–£5.00
Le Vieux Mas Marsanne Viognier VdP d'Oc 1998	15	–£5.00
Les Pierres Blanches Sancerre 1998	12	£7–10
Old Bush Vines Grenache Blanc 1999	14	£5.00
Orchid Vale Medium Chardonnay 1999	10	–£5.00
Petit Chablis de Maligny 1996	13.5	£7–10

Riesling Wintzenheim Zind Humbrecht 1997	14	£7–10
Riesling Zind Humbrecht Clos Hauserer 1997	14	£13–20
Tequirat Côtes de Gascogne 1998	14	–£5.00
Tokay Pinot Gris, Turckheim 1998	15.5	£5–7
Turckheim Alsace Blanc 1998	13	–£5.00
Turckheim Gewürztraminer 1998	16	£5–7
Turckheim Pinot Blanc 1998	14.5	£5.00
Zind Humbrecht Pinot d'Alsace 1997	16	£7–10

GERMAN WHITE

Piesporter Michelsberg QbA 1997	10	£3.50
Tokay Pinot Gris Herrenweg, Zind Humbrecht 1997	16.5	£13–20

HUNGARIAN WHITE

AK 28 Sauvignon Blanc 1998	14.5	–£5.00
Hilltop Gewürztraminer 1997	15.5	–£5.00
The Unpronounceable Grape 1997	12	–£3.50

ITALIAN RED

Amarone della Valpolicella Via Nova 1997	18	£7–10
Amarone della Valpolicella Zenato 1995	17	£13–20
Barbera Bricco del Bosco 1997	14	£5–7
Barolo Terre da Vino 1996	13	£10–13
Brunello di Montalcino, Casanova di Neri 1994	15.5	£20+
Cecchi Sangiovese 1998	14.5	–£5.00
Chianti Classico Riserva Rocca Guicciadia, Ricasoli 1997	16.5	£7–10
Chianti Grati Poggio Galiga, Banda Blu 1997	13	£7–10
Formulae Sangiovese di Toscana, Ricasoli 1998	13.5	£5–7
Graticciaia Puglia 1994	17	£13–20
La Bella Figura Merlot Cabernet 1998	15.5	–£5.00
Merlot Corvina Fiordaliso 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Umani Ronchi 1999	14	–£5.00
Montepulciano Selva Torta 1998	15.5	£5–7
Rosso di Montalcino, Casanova di Neri 1998	15	£10–13
Salice Salento Vallone 1997	13.5	£7–7
Trulli Primitivo 1997	14	–£5.00

Valpolicella Classico Superiore Zenato 1997	16	£5 00
Valpolicella Classico Zenato 1997	16.5	£5 00
Valpolicella Ripassa Superiore Zenato 1997	17	£7–10
Vigna Flaminio, Brindisi Rosso 1996	15	£5–7

ITALIAN WHITE

Falerio Pilastri Saladini 1999	15.5	£5 00
La Bella Figura Chardonnay/Pinot Grigio 1999	14.5	£5 00
Marc Xero Chardonnay NV	15	£5 00
Pinot Grigio Fiordaliso 1999	14.5	£5 00
Pinot Grigio Terrazze della Luna 1999	14	£5–7
Selva Torta Verdicchio 1999	14	£5–7
Soave Classico Zenato 1999	16 5	£5 00
Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Verbacco 1999	15 5	£5 00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Awatea Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1997	13 5	£13–20
Church Road Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998	15	£7–10
Felton Road Pinot Noir, Otago 1998	13 5	£13 20
Martinborough Pinot Noir 1998	13.5	£13 20
Montana Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Montana Reserve Merlot 1998	16 5	£7–10
Palliser Pinot Noir 1998	14	£10–13
Te Mata Estate Cabernet Merlot 1998	16 5	£7–10
Timara Cabernet/Merlot 1998	14	£5 00

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Azure Bay Sauvignon/ Semillon 1999	13.5	£5 00
Babich Pinot Gris, Marlborough 1999	16	£5 7
Church Road Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Church Road Reserve Chardonnay 1998	17	£10–13
Craggy Range Old Renwick Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£7 10
Dashwood Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5 7
Elston Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£13 20
Framingham Pinot Noir 1998	12	£10–13
In the Black Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5 7
Montana Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5 7
Montana 'O' Ormond Estate Chardonnay 1998	15 5	£10–13
Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1999	17	£7-10

Montana Reserve Gewürztraminer 1999	16	£7–10
Montana Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999	16	£7–10
Montana Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999	16.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2000	16	£5–7
Palliser Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Martinborough 1999	14	£7–10
Quartz Reef Pinot Gris 1999	13.5	£10–13
Sacred Hill Basket Press Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£7–10
Te Mata Estate Chardonnay 1999	17	£7–10
Timara Dry White 1999	13	£5.00
Tohu Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 1999	16	£7–10
Villa Maria Lightly Oaked Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 1999	16	£5–7
Villa Maria Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5–7
Villa Maria Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Wairau Valley 1998	15.5	£7–10
Villa Maria Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Wairau Valley 1999	17	£7–10

PORTUGUESE RED

Dom Ferraz Dao 1997	15	£5.00
Fiuza Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	14	£5.00
Pedras do Monte 1998	16	£5.00
Segada Tinto 1998	15.5	£5.00

ROMANIAN RED

River Route Limited Edition Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13.5	£5.00
River Route Pinot Noir 1998	12	£5.00

ROMANIAN WHITE

River Route Limited Edition Chardonnay 1997	15.5	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Cape View Cinsault/ Shiraz 1998	12	£5.00
Capells Court Cabernet 1998	14	£5–7
Oak Village Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	£5.00
The Pinotage Company Pinotage 1999	13.5	£5–7
Villiera Pinot Noir G & G Reserve 1997	13	£7–10
Winelands Cabernet Sauvignon/Franc, Stellenbosch 1997	13.5	£5–7

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

African Legend Sauvignon Blanc 1998	13	£5–7
Capells Court Chardonnay 1998	14	£5–7
Carisbrook Chenin/ Chardonnay 1999	14	–£5.00
Hartenberg 'Occasional' Auxerrois 1997	16	£5–7
Hartenberg 'Occasional' Bush Vine Chenin Blanc 1997	13.5	£5–7
Hartenberg 'Occasional' Pinot Blanc 1997	13	£5–7
Hartenberg Weisser Riesling, Stellenbosch 1997	13	£5–7
Oak Village Chardonnay 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Villiera Chenin Blanc 1997	15	–£5.00

SPANISH RED

Abadia Retuerta Rivola, Duero 1996	16.5	£5–7
Alvaro Palacios Finca Dofi Priorat 1996	18	£20+
Alvaro Palacios 'Les Terrasses' DO Priorat 1997	13.5	£13–20
Baron de Ley Rioja Reserva 1996	13	£7–10
Casa Rural Tinto NV	14.5	–£3.50
Castillo Ygay Rioja Gran Reserva 1989	10	£13–20
Chivite Reserva, Gran Feudo, Navarra 1995	13.5	£5–7
Conde de Valdemar Rioja Crianza 1997	13.5	£5–7
Conde de Valdemar Rioja Reserva 1995	14	£7–10
Contino Rioja Reserva 1995	15	£20+
Cune Reserva 1995	13.5	£7–10
Dominio di Montalvo Rioja 1998	13	£5–7
El Meson Rioja NV	15	£5–7
Finca Valpiedra Rioja 1995	12	£13–20
Jumilla Senorio de Robles 1998	16	–£3.50
Marques de Aragon Garnacha 1998	15	£5.00
Marques de Grinon Rioja 1998	15.5	£5–7
Marques de Grinon Rioja Reserva 1996	14	£7–10
Marques de Grinon Valdepusa Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16.5	£7–10
Marques de Grinon Valdepusa Syrah 1997	17	£10–13
Marques de Murrieta Rioja Reserva Especial 1995	13	£13–20
Marques de Riscal Reserva 1996	14	£7–10
Navajas Rioja Crianza 1997	13.5	£5–7
Ochoa Gran Reserva, Navarra 1992	14	£10–13

Raimat Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	15	£7–10
Raimat Merlot 1996	15.5	£7–10
Remonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	15.5	–£5.00
Torres Gran Coronas 1996	17	£7–10
Torres Gran Sangre de Toro 1996	16	£5–7
Vina Real Gran Reserva 1988	13	£13–20
Vina Real Gran Reserva 1991	13.5	£13–20

SPANISH WHITE

Albarino Condes de Alberei 1999	14.5	£5–7
Albarino Enexebre 1997	15.5	£7–10
Campo Viejo Barrel Fermented Viura 1998	13	£5–7
Casa Rural White NV	15.5	£3.50
Castillo de Liria Rosé NV	15	£3.50
Conde de Valdemar Barrique Fermented Rioja 1996	16	£7–10
Conde de Valdemar Barrique Fermented Rioja 1998	12	£7–10
Conde de Valdemar Rosado 1999	14	–£5.00
Dominio di Montalvo White Rioja 1998	15.5	£5–7
Enexbre Albarino Condes de Albarei 1997	15	£5–7
Torres Vina Esmeralda 1999	14	£5–7
Torres Vina Sol 1999	14	–£5.00

USA RED

Clos du Bois Merlot 1996	14.5	£13–20
E & J Gallo Ruby Cabernet 1999	14	–£5.00
Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998	15.5	£5–7
Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15.5	£5–7
Redwood Trail Pinot Noir 1997	13.5	£5–7
Robert Mondavi North Coast Cellars Zinfandel 1995	15	£7–10
Talus Zinfandel 1997	13	£5–7
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7
Vendange Californian Red 1998	14	–£5.00
Woodbridge Mondavi Zinfandel 1996	14	£5–7

USA WHITE

Columbia Crest Chardonnay 1997	15.5	£5–7
Dunnewood Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Fetzer Barrel Select Viognier 1997	17	£7–10

Fetzer Sundial Chardonnay, 1998	16	£5–7
Fetzer Syrah Rosé 1999	13	£5–7
Fetzer Viognier 1999	15	£7–10
Jekel Chardonnay, Gravelstone Vineyards 1996	15.5	£7–10
St Supery Sauvignon Blanc 1997	15.5	£7–10
Vendange Californian Dry White 1998	11	£5.00
Vendanges White Zinfandel 1998	9	£5.00
Wente Riva Ranch Chardonnay 1996	16	£7–10
Woodbridge Californian Sauvignon Blanc, Robert Mondavi 1996	13	£5–7

SPARKLING WINES

Bollinger RD 1985	13	£20+
Bollinger Special Cuvée NV	14	£20+
Canard Duchene Charles VII NV	14.5	£20+
Charles Heidsieck 'Mis en Caves 1995' NV	13	£20+
Cool Ridge Sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir Brut NV (Hungary)	12	£5.00
Deutz NV (New Zealand)	15	£10–13
Gosset Grande Millesime 1989	15	£20+
Gosset Grande Reserve NV	14	£20+
Green Point Brut 1996	15	£10–13
Krug Grande Cuvée NV	13	£20+
Krug Vintage 1989	13.5	£20+
La Corunna Cava NV	15	£5.00
Lanson Vintage Gold Label 1993	13.5	£20+
Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand)	14	£7–10
Lindauer Brut Rosé NV (New Zealand)	15	£7–10
Lindauer Special Reserve NV (New Zealand)	16	£7–10
Louis Roederer Brut Vintage 1993 (magnum)	13	£20+
Mumm Cuvee Napa Brut (California)	16	£7–10
Out of the Blue Lightly Sparkling (Italy) (4%)	10	£3.50
Perrier-Jouet Brut Vintage 1992	12	£20+
Pinot Grigio Frizzante NV (Italy)	15	£5.00
Piper Heidsieck Rare 1985	17	£20+
Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill Cuvée 1988	16	£20+
Pommery Vintage 1991	12	£20+
Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame 1990	16	£20+

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

UNWINS

I've been saying for years that this is a sleepy dog with an appetite and fangs to match and so events proved. Who would have believed that this is the retailer which snapped up Fullers, busily spending August 2000 painting every one of the shops in its corporate bee-sting yellow. Every branch. That's right No 'rationalisation', no closures, no streamlining

Unwins is in a bullish mood. (It even sells Pelorus 1995, 18 points, one of the greatest bubblies on the planet, for £12 49, cheaper than anyone else.)

In 1999 it experimented with two forecourt formats in Rochester and Witney, Oxfordshire, teaming up with Elf Oil It rapidly won a retail award for one of them, snatching the prize for Best Site With a Licence to Sell Alcohol in the Forecourt Trader of the Year. No, madam, I did not make that up. It's absolutely true.

The company also announced its intention to look at Internet selling possibilities and has launched a website which can now take orders when previously the site only pushed in-store promotions. Harder to win a Best Site award in this category, I would have said, but we shall see.

Late in 1999 Unwins opened a pilot store which offered freshly baked bread and a cheese counter in addition to the booze. The store was in Tunbridge Wells and was originally part of the Davisons chain (which small chain Unwins snapped up a few years ago). The company is, so it was said, not planning to diversify by setting up new specialist formats but is keen to give its stores 'individual characteristics to suit certain locations'. It was said the Tunbridge Wells outlet was a 'one-off' I recommend Booze, Bread & Cheese as the brand name: BBC you've got to admit it has a ring

Unwins continued to haul in the awards when David Hitchens of the Unwins branch in Wootton Bassett won the 1999 Off Licence of the Year Award. Wootton Bassett? Shame on you. Historical place, Wootton Bassett, in Wiltshire. Known as Wodeton in the Domesday Book (no Unwins branch recorded) and the early-English-style church is worth a visit if you're passing (as, presumably, is Mr Hitchens' branch).

But of course the big event for Unwins was that acquisition of Fuller Smith & Turner's 61 wine shops for a wholly reasonable, not to say cheap, £7.5 million Slightly above-average footballers change clubs for sums like

that, and so Unwins knew they had a bargain on their hands. There was some *sotto voce* mutterings by wine gossips at this news. Unwins is seen, by some wine commentators, as a vulgarian from the outer suburbs, while Fullers was judged to be more up market. Unwins reacted by dismissing the suggestion that it will 'dumb down' the wine range at Fullers, though it failed to hold on to one of the brightest wine buyers around, Roger Higgs, who had transformed the wine range in a few short years. Mr Higgs eschewed offers from Unwins and elsewhere in the trade to go and work for a dynamic British wine importer, saying to me, after a few months in the job, 'how wonderful it is not to have to worry about wearing a suit to work'.

Unwins said a new list combining some of the current ranges from both Fullers and Unwins would be unveiled in the spring, but when I tasted the range it struck me that Unwins' wines firmly predominated. Debate raged at this point about whether the Fullers shops would stay as they were or would be subsumed into the yellow belly of the great bee. Amusingly, the trade magazine *Retail Week*'s Good Shop/Bad Shop features showed at this time the Unwins store in Merton Road, London SW18, as an example of a bad shop contrasting it with, no, not a Fullers outlet but with Galeries Lafayette in Paris. I take no defensive brief from Unwins, but I do think the Good Shop/Bad Shop idea only works if you compare like with like.

At last, the integrated Unwins/Fullers wine list was revealed in late spring 2000. The merged list comprised some 900 wines, 100 more than on the previous Unwins list. Unwins said it had added about 100 wines, keeping some 54% of the Fullers range, from which we can conclude they must have delisted some of their own wines. Roger, old sport, your prowess lives on without you.

Around this time, an Unwins personnel manager, Philip Dudman, who had invented bogus employees in a £100,000 scam, was jailed for a year. There was also, I believe, a *femme fatale* element to this, but it is not my business to track her down. The superbly monikered Mr Dudman apparently conned Unwins out of this large sum over an eighteen month period, having been with the company for twenty years. Unwins announced that it was resuming the old company practice of circulating memos detailing staff misdemeanours (though one assumes few reach Mr Dudman's level of inventive chutzpah). Though these memos do not, so it was said, necessarily name names, some staff were reported to be less than happy about the revival of this practice.

I look forward to my mole sending me copies of these memos.

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ARGENTINIAN RED

J & F Lurton Bonarda/ Tempranillo 1998	10	£5 00
Magdalena River Malbec/ Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendoza 1997	13	–£5 00
Magdalena River Sangiovese/Bonarda, Mendoza 1998	12	–£5 00
Norton Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15	£5 00
Santa Julia Malbec Oak Reserve 1998	16	£5–7
Santa Julia Tempranillo Oak Reserve 1998	17	£5–7
Terrazas Malbec 1999	15	£5–7

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Alamos Ridge Chardonnay 1997	16	£5 7
Catena Agrelo Vineyards Chardonnay 1997	14	£7-10
J & F Lurton Pinot Gris 1998	13	–£5 00
Magdalena River Chardonnay, Mendoza 1997	15	–£5.00
Santa Julia Oak Reserve Chardonnay 1997	16.5	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN RED

Baileys 1904 Block Shiraz 1994	14	£10–13
Banrock Station Shiraz 1997	11	–£5 00
Clancy's Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/ Cabernet Franc 1998	17	£7–10
Hill of Hope Shiraz 1997	14	£5 7
Ironstone Shiraz Grenache 1998	16.5	£5–7
J J McWilliam Merlot 1997	13	£5–7
Leasingham Clare Valley Grenache 1996	14.5	£7 10
Oxford Landing Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1999	15.5	£5–7

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 1999	15	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Shiraz Cabernet 1999	15.5	£5–7
Vine Vale Grenache 1998	14.5	–£5.00
Wakefield Cabernet Sauvignon, Clare Valley 1998	16	£5–7
Woodvale Shiraz 1998	13	–£5.00

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Capel Vale C V Unwooded Chardonnay 1999	15	£7–10
David Wynn Chardonnay, S. Australia 1998	16	£5–7
Grant Burge Late Harvest Muscat 1997	16	£5.00
Grant Burge Old Vine Semillon, Barossa Valley 1997	14	£7–10
Howcroft Bin 6000 Verdelho 1998	15.5	£5–7
Ironstone Semillon Chardonnay 1999	12	£5–7
Lindemans Botrytis Riesling 1997 (half-bottle)	16	£5–7
Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	–£5.00
Oxford Landing Viognier 1998	16	£7–7
Peter Lehmann The Barossa Semillon 1998	16.5	£5–7
Peter Lehmannn Vine Vale Chenin Blanc 1998	15.5	£5.00
Rosemount Estate Diamond Label Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Stanton & Killeen Rutherglen Muscat NV (half-bottle)	16	£5.7
Stockman's Bridge White NV	14	£5.00
Tim Gramp Watervale Riesling 1997	16.5	£7–10
Tyrrells Long Flat Chardonnay 1999	14	£5–7
Wakefield Chardonnay, Clare Valley 1997	13	£5–7
Wakefield White Clare Crouchen/Chardonnay 1997	14	£5–7
Woodvale Chardonnay 1999	15	–£5.00
Woodvale Semillon/ Chardonnay 1999	15.5	–£5.00

BULGARIAN RED

Country Wine Merlot/ Pinot Noir NV, Sliven	14	–£3.50

BULGARIAN WHITE

Country Wine Muskat & Ugni Blanc, Shumen NV	14	£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Canepa Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec 1999	16	–£5.00

Canepa Zinfandel 1999	14	£5.00
Carmen Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	16	£5.00
Casa Donoso Cabernet Sauvignon Domaine Oriental 1998	12.5	£5.00
Casa Donoso Reservado Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	12	£5–7
Cono Sur Reserve Pinot Noir 1998	16	£5–7
Donoso Limited Edition 1997	13.5	£13–20
Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	17.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Merlot 1999	16.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Syrah Reserva 1998	16	£7.10
Gracia Merlot Reserve, Aconcagua 1997	16.5	£7–10
La Palmeria Merlot 1999	17	£5.00
Penta Morande Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec 1999	16.5	£5.00
Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1997	17.5	£7–10
Vina Porta Cabernet Sauvignon, Maipo 1999	16.5	£5.00
Vina Porta Limited Edition Merlot 1998	15	£5.00
Vina Porta Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	£5.00

CHILEAN WHITE

Canepa Semillon, Colchagua Valley 1999	16.5	£5.00
Casa Donoso Chardonnay Domaine Oriental 1999	13	£5.00
Casa Donoso Reservado Chardonnay Domaine Oriental 1999	12	£5–7
Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay 1998	17	£5–7
Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Chardonnay, Casablanca 1996	17.5	£7–10
Casablanca Chardonnay 1998	15.5	£5–7
Concha y Toro Gewürztraminer 1999	16	£5.00
Errazuriz Wild Ferment Chardonnay, Casablanca 1998	17	£7–10
Isla Negra Chardonnay 1997	16	£7–10
La Palmeria Chardonnay 2000	15.5	£5.00
Valdivieso Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5.00
Valdivieso Reserve Chardonnay 1997	15.5	£5–7

FRENCH RED

Ash Ridge Grenache/ Merlot 1998	12	£5.00
Ash Ridge Syrah d'Oc 1998	13	£5.00
Chapelle St Marie Syrah 1998	16.5	£5.00
Chassagne Montrachet Louis Jadot 1994	11	£13–20

Château Astruc Minervois 1998	14.5	£5.00
Château Beychevelle St Julien 4eme Cru 1995	12	£20+
Château de Cazeneuve Le Roc de Mates Pic St Loup 1997	15	£7–10
Château de Cazeneuve Les Terres Rouges Pic St Loup 1997	15.5	£5–7
Château Giscours Margaux 3eme Cru 1995	11	£20+
Château Trignon Côtes du Rhône Villages Sablet Ramillades 1998	17.5	£5–7
Châteauneuf-du-Pape Louis Mousset 1998	13.5	£10–13
Côte Rotie Guigal 1996	17	£20+
Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998	16	£7–10
Domaine de l'Arneillaud Cairanne Côtes du Rhône Villages 1999	18	£5–7
Domaine de la Grand Bellane, Valreas 1997	16	£5–7
Domaine de la Soleiade, Vacqueyras 1998	15	£5–7
Fitou Château de Segure 1998	15.5	£5–7
Gigondas Domaine des Amandiers 1998	14	£7–10
Hautes Côtes de Beaune 1997	10	£7–10
James Herrick Cuvée Simone VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	–£5.00
La Cigaliere Côtes du Rhône 1998	15	–£5.00
Les Beaux Sites Domaine de Castan Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15.5	–£5.00
Madiran Château de Crouseilles 1993	14	£7–10
Mauregard Château La Grave Bordeaux 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Saumur Domaine de la Sicardiere 1997	15.5	–£5.00
St Emilion 1998	13	£5–7
Valreas Domaine de la Grande Bellane 1998 (organic)	16.5	£5–7
Wild Pig Barrel Reserve Shiraz 1998	14	–£5.00

FRENCH WHITE

Anjou Blanc 1997	11	–£5.00
Ash Ridge Grenache/ Viognier 1999	13	–£5.00
Château Vieux Malveyren Monbazillac Domaine Vilate 1990	16.5	£13–20
Condrieu Guigal 1998	15.5	£13–20
Corbieres Les Producteurs du Mont Tauch	12	–£5.00
Côtes du Rhône Guigal 1998	14.5	£7–10
Cuvée Philippe VdP du Comte Tolosan 1999	12.5	–£3.50
Domaine de Saubagnere Côtes de Gascogne 1998	14.5	£5.00
Domaine des Forges Coteaux du Layon-Chaume 1997	16	£7–10

Domaine Valette Pouilly-Vinzelles Vieilles Vignes 1997	16	£13–20
La Chablisienne Chablis Vieilles Vignes 1997	13	£7–10
Les Trois Herault Les Chais Beaucarois NV	13	£3.50
Macon Lugny Les Charmes 1998	14	£5–7
Marquis de Beausoleil NV	15.5	£5–7
Marsanne/Roussane Frederic Roger 1999	14.5	£5.00
Muscadet sur Lie Pierre Brevin 1997	13.5	£5.00
Petit Chablis Albert Bichot 1999	12	£5–7
Pinot Blanc d'Alsace Cave de Turckheim 1999	14	£5.00
Pouilly Fume Les Griottines 1998	10	£7–10
Sancerre Harmonie Oak Aged 1997	12	£13–20
Sancerre Les Roches Vacheron 1999	13.5	£10–13
Sancerre Les Romains Vacherons 1999 (rosé)	13.5	£7–10
St Veran Domaine des Deux Roches 1999	15.5	£7–10

GERMAN WHITE

Fitz Riter Durkheimer Hochbenn Riesling Kabinett 1997	13	£5–7

GREEK WHITE

Samos Vin Doux Naturel NV	15.5	£5.00

ITALIAN RED

Barocco Rosso del Salento 1999	13	£5.00
Chianti Classico Reserva Villa Antinori 1997	14	£7–10
Ciro Classico 1998	14	£5.00
La Mura Rosso Casa Girelli 1999	14	£5.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Miglianico 1997	15.5	£5.00
Primitivo Merum 1998	13	£5.00
Villa Cafaggio Chianti Classico 1997	13	£5–7

ITALIAN WHITE

Carato Barrique Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5–7
Chardonnay Mezzo Mondo 1998	14	£5.00
Moscato d'Asti Araldica 1998	10	£5.00

LEBANESE RED

Château Musar 1994	10	£10–13

NEW ZEALAND RED

Rippon Pinot Noir 1998	10	£13–20

Sacred Hill Basket Press Merlot/Cabernet, Hawkes Bay 1996	14	£7–10

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

De Redcliffe Mangatawhiri Chardonnay 1997	15	£7–10
Hunter's Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£7–10
Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£7–10
Kumeu River Chardonnay 1998	16	£10–13
Marlborough Gold Sauvignon 1999	14.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Chardonnay, Marlborough 1999	16.5	£5–7
Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Bela Fonte Jaen 1998	16	–£5.00
Dao Dom Ferraz Reserva Caves Primavera 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Pedras do Monte 1999	15	–£5.00
Portada Vinho Regional Estremadura 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Quinta das Setencostas, Alenquer 1998	16.5	£5–7
Quinta do Crasto Reserva 1997	17	£7–10
Segada Red 1998	15.5	–£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Bical Bela Fonte 1998	15	–£5.00
Segada White 1998	13	–£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

African Legend Pinotage 1998	14	–£5.00
Bellingham Pinotage 1998	16	£5–7
Cape Cinsault/Merlot 1999	13	–£5.00
Cathedral Cellar Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	15	£7–10
Clos Malverne Cabernet/ Shiraz, Stellenbosch 1997	14.5	£5–7
Clos Malverne Pinotage, Stellenbosch 1999	16	£5–7
Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16	£7–10
Leef Op Hoop Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot, Stellenbosch 1998	14	£5–7
Millbrook Cinsault 1998	14	£5.00
Neil Joubert Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	13	£5–7
Spice Route Shiraz 1998	16	£7–10

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Bellingham Chardonnay 1999	15	£5–7
Cape Chardonnay 1999	13	£5.00
Cape White 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Cathedral Cellar Chardonnay 1997	15.5	£7–10

Coastline Chenin Blanc 2000	13.5	£5.00
Fairview Chardonnay 1999	16.5	£5–7
Jordan Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 1999	16.5	£5–7
Jordan Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1998	16.5	£7–10
L'Avenir Chenin Blanc 1998	15.5	£5–7
Vergelegen Chardonnay 1998	16	£5–7

SPANISH RED

Castillo Perelada Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13.5	£7–10
Conde de Valdemar Reserva 1995	14	£7–10
Cosme Palacio y Hermanos Rioja 1997	16	£5–7
Gran Vos Reserva 1995	15	£7–10
Marques de Grinon Tempranillo 1998	15	£5–7
Martinez Bujanda Gran Reserva 1993	13.5	£13–20
Nekeas Barrel Fermented Merlot 1997	13.5	£5–7
Ochoa Tempranillo 1997	15	£5–7
Tapon de Oro Garnacha 1998	13.5	£5–7
Valdepusa Cabernet Sauvignon Marques de Grinon 1997	16.5	£7–10
Vina Albali Reserva 1995	13	£5.00
Vinas del Vero Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£5–7

SPANISH WHITE

Nekeas Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1998	15	£5–7
Vinas del Vero Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Vinas del Vero Clarion, Somontano 1997	13	£7–10

USA RED

Beaulieu Vineyard Coastal Pinot Noir 1998	14	£5–7
Blossom Hill NV	10	£5.00
De Loach Zinfandel Platinum 1996	10	£7–10
Delicato Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14	£5–7
Delicato Zinfandel 1998	13	£5–7
Fetzer Private Collection Cabernet Sauvignon 1994	15	£13–20
Fetzer Syrah 1997	14	£5–7
Ironstone Vineyards Cabernet Franc 1997	15	£5–7
King Estate Pinot Noir 1995	12	£13–20
R H Phillips Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15	£5–7
Saintsbury Garnet Carneros Pinot Noir 1998	13.5	£10–13
Schug Pinot Noir 1996	12	£10–13
Seven Peaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	16.5	£7–10

Stonehedge Merlot 1998	15	£5–7
Thornhill Pinot Noir 1996	12	£5.00
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7
Wente Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	16	£7–10
Wente Charles Wetmore Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	12.5	£10–13
Wente Crane Ridge Reserve Merlot 1997	13.5	£10–13
Wente Reliz Creek Reserve Pinot Noir 1996	14	£10–13
Wente Zinfandel 1998	11	£5–7

USA WHITE

Blossom Hill NV	10	£5.00
Bonterra Viognier 1998 (organic)	15	£7–10
Byron Chardonnay, Santa Barbara 1996	13.5	£13–20
Coastal Chardonnay, Robert Mondavi 1997	17	£10–13
Fetzer Sundial Chardonnay 1997	16	£5–7
Redwood Trail Chardonnay 1998	15.5	£5–7
Seven Oaks Reserve Chardonnay 1997	14.5	£10–13
Seven Peaks Chardonnay 1997	13	£7–10
Sutter Home Chardonnay 1997	14	£5.00
Sutter Home White Zinfandel 1998	8	£5.00
Wente Chardonnay 1998	14	£5–7
Wente Riva Ranch Reserve Chardonnay 1996	14	£7–10
Wente Sauvignon Blanc 1998	13	£5–7
Wente White Zinfandel 1998	10	£5–7

FORTIFIED WINES

Calem 10 Year Old Port	11	£13–20
Calem Colheita Tawny Port 1987	10	£20+
Calem Late Bottled Vintage Port 1994	14	£7–10
Calem Quinta da Foz Port 1987	13	£13–20
Calem Vintage Port 1983	10	£20+
Cockburns 1991	13	£20+
Croft 1991	13	£20+
Dos Cortados Dry Old Oloroso Sherry	14	£7–10
Henriques & Henriques Aged 10 Years Malmsey Madeira	16	£13–20
Henriques & Henriques Aged 5 Years Finest Medium Dry Madeira	15	£10–13
Lustau Old East India Sherry	17	£7–10
Matusalem Sweet Old Oloroso Sherry	14.5	£7–10

Quinta do Noval 1991	13	£20+
Warres 1991	16	£20+

SPARKLING WINES

Alain Thienot Brut 1990	10	£20+
Cuvée Princesse de Aimery Blanquette de Limoux 1997	13	£5–7
Duchatel Blanc de Blancs Brut NV	12.5	£13–20
Duchatel Brut Champagne NV	13	£10–13
Duchatel Champagne Brut 1994	13.5	£13–20
Duchatel Rosé Brut Champagne NV	11	£13–20
Freixenet Cava Brut NV	15.5	£5–7
Graham Beck Brut NV (South Africa)	14	£5–7
Jacob's Creek Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV (Australia)	15	£5–7
Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand)	14.5	£7–10
Pelorus Brut 1995	14	£10–13

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

VICTORIA WINE

See Thresher/Bottoms Up/Wine Rack/Victoria Wine 1st Quench, page 423.

ARGENTINIAN RED

Anubis Malbec 1999	16	£5–7
Argento Malbec 1999	16.5	£5.00
Corazon Bonarda 1999	16	£5.00
Corazon Tempranillo 1999	16.5	£5.00
Libertad Malbec Bonarda 1999	15	£5.00
Libertad Malbec Sangiovese 1998	15	£5.00
Martins Andino Malbec Bonarda 1998	14	£5.00
Villa Atuel Syrah 1999	15.5	£5.00

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Corazon Pinot Gris 1999	15	£5.00
Correas Torrontes Chardonnay 1999	14	£5.00
Norton Semillon Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00
Norton Torrontes, Mendoza 1999	15.5	£5.00

AUSTRALIAN RED

Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 1998	15.5	£5–7
Leasingham Domaine Cabernet/Malbec 1997	10	£7–10
Leasingham Grenache 1996	14.5	£7–10
Lindemans Padthaway Shiraz 1997	15.5	£7–10
Nanya Estate Malbec/ Ruby Cabernet 1998	10	£5.00
Tatachilla Grenache Shiraz 1998	16	£5–7
Wynn's Coonawarra Shiraz 1996	16.5	£5–7
Yalumba Bush Vine Grenache 1997	14	£7–10

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

David Traeger Verdelho, Victoria 1998	16	£7–10
Hardys Nottage Hill Riesling 1998	15.5	£5.00
Lindemans Botrytis Riesling 1996 (half-bottle)	17	£5–7

Mitchelton Chardonnay 1996	15	£7–10
Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£5.00
Pewsey Vale Riesling 1997	16	£5–7
Tollana Unoaked Chardonnay 1999	15.5	£5.00
Wolf Blass South Australia Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 1999	16	£7–10
Wolf Blass South Australia Chardonnay 1999	16	£7–10

BULGARIAN RED

Domaine Boyar Premium Oaked Cabernet Shumen 1997	13.5	£5.00
Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	14	£5.00
Domaine Boyar Premium Reserve Merlot 1996	14.5	£5.00

BULGARIAN WHITE

Boyar Muskat & Ugni Blanc NV	11	£3.50
Copper Crossing Dry White NV	10	£3.50
Copper Crossing Medium White NV	12	£3.50
Domaine de Boyar Targovischte Chardonnay 1997	12	£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16.5	£7–10
Casa Lapostolle Cuvée Alexandre Merlot 1997	17.5	£10–13
Casa Lapostolle Merlot 1998	16.5	£5–7
Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1998	16.5	£5.00
Cono Sur Pinot Noir 1998	14.5	£5.00
Errazuriz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	17.5	£5–7
Errazuriz Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16	£7–10
Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15.5	£5–7
La Palmeria Cabernet/ Merlot 1998	16	£5–7
Las Colinas Cabernet Merlot 1999	15	£5.00
Las Colinas Chilean Red NV	13.5	£3.50
Las Colinas Merlot 1999	15	£5.00
Martins Don Rui Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13.5	£5–7
Valdivieso Malbec 1998	16	£5.00
Valdivieso Merlot 1999	15.5	£5.00
Valdivieso Reserve Pinot Noir 1996	14.5	£7–10
Veramonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16	£5–7
Veramonte Merlot 1997	14	£5–7

CHILEAN WHITE

Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc 1999	17	£5–7
Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Chardonnay 1997	17	–£5.00
Cono Sur Gewürztraminer 1998	15.5	–£5.00
La Palmeria Chardonnay 1998	16	–£5.00
Las Colinas Chardonnay 1999	15	–£5.00
Las Colinas Riesling 1997	15.5	–£5.00
Santa Ines Legardo de Armida Reserve Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£5–7
Veramonte Chardonnay 1998	13.5	£5–7

FRENCH RED

Abbotts Cumulus Minervois 1998	16.5	£5–7
Château Sauvage Premier Côtes de Bordeaux 1997	13	£5–7
Château Suau, 1er Côtes de Bordeaux 1997 (unoaked)	13.5	£5–7
Cornas Les Nobles Rives, Côtes de Tain 1994	14	£10–13
Côte Rotie, Domaine de Bonserine 1996	10	£20+
Côtes de Beaune Villages 1996	12	£7–10
Côtes du Rhône Villages Les Faisans 1998	14	–£5.00
Dark Horse Cahors 1998	14	–£5.00
Domaine Peyrat Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15	£5–7
Fitou Special Reserve 1997	14.5	–£5.00
Fitou Terroir de Tuchan 1998	17	£7–10
Fleurie Georges Duboeuf 1998	11	£7–10
Fleurie Regional Classics 1998	13.5	£5–7
French Revolution Le Rouge 1999	16	–£5.00
Grenache VdP des Coteaux de l'Ardeche 1997	14.5	–£3.50
Mont Tauch Old Bush Vines Carignan 1998	13	£5.00
Morgon Domaine des Côtes de Douby 1998	13.5	£5–7
Old Bush Vines Carignan 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Pinot Noir, Louis Jadot 1998	12.5	£7–10
Red Burgundy Vergy 1997	12	–£5.00
Sirius Red 1997	13.5	£5–7

FRENCH WHITE

Bordeaux Sauvignon Calvet 1997	12	–£5.00
Chablis Domaine de Bieville 1998	14	£7–10
Chablis Regional Classics 1997	13.5	£7–10
Chablis Vieilles Vignes, Defaix 1996	11	£10–13

Chablis Vieilles Vignes, La Cuvée Exceptionelle, Defaix 1997	12.5	£13–20
Château Filhot Sauternes 1990	15	£20+
Château Petit Moulin Blanc, Bordeaux 1998	12.5	£5–7
Domaine Pré Baron Sauvignon de Touraine 1998	14.5	£5–7
French Revolution Le Blanc 1999	13	£5.00
Le Vieux Mas Marsanne Viognier VdP d'Oc 1998	13	£5.00
Les Pierres Blanches Sancerre 1998	13	£7–10
Meursault, Les Chevaliers, Domaine Rene Monnier 1996	12	£13–20
Montagny Premier Cru Oak Aged Chardonnay 1997	13.5	£5–7
Old Bush Vines Grenache Blanc 1999	14	£5.00
Rivers Meet White Bordeaux 1997	11	£5.00
Teuqirat Côtes de Gascogne 1998	14.5	£5.00
Turckheim Alsace Blanc 1998	13	£5.00
Turckheim Gewurztraminer 1998	16	£5–7
Turckheim Pinot Blanc 1998	14.5	£5.00

GERMAN WHITE

Kendermann Dry Riesling 1998	13.5	£5.00

HUNGARIAN WHITE

AK 28 Sauvignon Blanc 1998	14.5	£5.00
Hilltop Gewürztraminer 1997	15.5	£6.00
The Unpronounceable Grape 1997	12	£3.50

ITALIAN RED

Amarone della Valpolicella Via Nova 1997	18	£7–10
Barolo Terre da Vino 1996	13	£10–13
Brunello di Montalcino, Casanova di Neri 1994	15.5	£20+
Cecchi Sangiovese 1998	14.5	£5.00
Formulae Sangiovese di Toscana, Ricasoli 1998	13.5	£5–7
La Bella Figura Merlot Cabernet 1998	15.5	£5.00
Merlot Corvina Fiordaliso 1998	13.5	£5.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Umani Ronchi 1999	14	£5.00
Montepulciano Selva Torta 1998	15.5	£5–7
Rosso di Montalcino, Casanova di Neri 1998	15	£10–13
Salice Salento Vallone 1997	13.5	£5–7
Trulli Primitivo 1997	14	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico Superiore Zenato 1997	16	£5.00
Valpolicella Classico Zenato 1997	16.5	£5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Falerio Pilastri Saladini 1998	13.5	£5.00
Pinot Grigio Fiordaliso 1998	13.5	£5.00
Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Verbacco 1999	13.5	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Awatea Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1997	13.5	£13–20
Awatea Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1997	13.5	£13–20
Church Road Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998	15	£7–10
Montana Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Montana Reserve Merlot 1998	16.5	£7–10
Timara Cabernet/Merlot 1998	14	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Church Road Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£7–10
Timara Dry White 1998	13.5	£5.00
Villa Maria Lightly Oaked Chardonnay 1999	16	£5–7
Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 1999	16	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Dom Ferraz Dao 1997	15	£5.00
Fiuza Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	14	£5.00
Pedras do Monte 1998	16	£5.00
Segada Tinto 1998	13.5	£5.00

ROMANIAN RED

River Route Limited Edition Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13.5	£5.00
River Route Pinot Noir 1998	12	£5.00

ROMANIAN WHITE

River Route Limited Edition Chardonnay 1997	13.5	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Cape View Cinsault/ Shiraz 1998	12	£5.00
Oak Village Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	15	£5.00
The Pinotage Company Pinotage 1999	13.5	£5–7

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

African Legend Sauvignon Blanc 1998	13	£5–7
Capells Court Chardonnay 1998	18	£5–7
Oak Village Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5.00

SPANISH RED

Abadia Retuerta Rivola, Duero 1996	16.5	£5–7
Baron de Ley Rioja Reserva 1996	13	£7–10
Casa Rural Tinto NV	14.5	–£3.50
Chivite Navarra Vina Marcos 1997	13	–£5.00
Chivite Reserva, Gran Feudo, Navarra 1995	13.5	£5–7
Conde de Valdemar Rioja Crianza 1997	13.5	£5–7
Conde de Valdemar Rioja Reserva 1995	14	£7–10
Dominio di Montalvo Rioja 1998	13	£5–7
El Meson Rioja NV	15	£5–7
Jumilla Senorio de Robles 1998	16	–£3.50
Marques de Aragon Garnacha 1998	15	–£5.00
Marques de Riscal Reserva 1996	14	£7–10
Navajas Rioja Crianza 1997	13.5	£5–7
Remonte Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	15.5	–£5.00

SPANISH WHITE

Albarino Condes de Alberei 1999	14.5	£5–7
Campo Viejo Barrel Fermented Viura 1998	13	£5–7
Casa Rural White NV	15.5	£3.50
Castillo de Liria Rosé NV	15	–£3.50
Conde de Valdemar Rosado 1999	14	–£5.00
Dominio di Montalvo White Rioja 1998	15.5	£5–7
Moscatel de Valencia NV	16	–£5.00
Torres Vina Esmeralda 1999	14	£5–7
Torres Vina Sol 1999	14	–£5.00

USA RED

Blossom Hill Californian Red NV	10	–£5.00
E & J Gallo Ruby Cabernet 1999	14	–£5.00
Eagle Peak Merlot, Fetzer Vineyards 1998	13.5	£5–7
Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13.5	£5–7
Redwood Trail Pinot Noir 1997	13.5	£5–7
Talus Zinfandel 1996	13.5	£5–7
Talus Zinfandel 1997	13	£5–7
Turning Leaf Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	12	£5–7
Turning Leaf Zinfandel 1996	12.5	£5–7
Vendange Californian Red 1998	14	–£5.00
Woodbridge Mondavi Zinfandel 1996	14	£5–7

USA WHITE

Columbia Crest Chardonnay 1997	13.5	£5–7

Fetzer Sundial Chardonnay, 1998	16	£5–7
Fetzer Syrah Rosé 1999	13	£5–7
Vendange Californian Dry White 1998	14	–£5.00
Vendanges White Zinfandel 1998	9	–£5.00
Wente Riva Ranch Chardonnay 1996	16	£7–10

FORTIFIED WINES

Dows LBV 1992	13.5	£10–13
Quinta de Vargellas Vintage Port 1986	15	£13–20
Taylors Quinta de Terra Feita 1986	17	£13–20

SPARKLING WINES

Blossom Hill Sparkling NV (USA)	13	£5–7
Bollinger RD 1985	13	£20+
Bollinger Special Cuvée NV	14	£20+
Canard Duchene Charles VII NV	14.5	£20+
Charles Heidsieck Mis en Caves 1995	13	£20+
Cool Ridge Sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir Brut NV (Hungary)	12	£5.00
Cuvée Napa Brut, Mumm NV	16	£7–10
Deutz Marlborough Cuvée NV	13.5	£10–13
Gosset Grande Millesime 1989	15	£20+
Gosset Grande Reserve NV	14	£20+
Green Point Brut 1996	13	£10–13
Krug Grande Cuvée NV	13	£20+
Krug Vintage 1989	13.5	£20+
La Corunna Cava NV	15	–£5.00
Lanson Vintage Gold Label 1993	13.5	£20+
Louis Roederer Brut Vintage 1993 (magnum)	13	£20+
Marquis de la Tour Demi Sec NV (France)	8	–£5.00
Marquis de la Tour Rose NV (France)	14	–£5.00
Piper Heidsieck Rare 1985	17	£20+
Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill Cuvée 1988	16	£20+
Pommery Vintage 1991	12	£20+
Seaview Brut Rosé	14	£5–7
Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame 1990	16	£20+

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

WAITROSE

I have a strong suspicion that Waitrose's wine sales have not increased much for some years. Indeed, its share of the overall market will have slightly fallen, whereas its most significant competitors are doing burgeoning business and increasing market share. Yet *Supermarketing* magazine reported late in 1999 that Waitrose was putting pressure on Sainsbury's by ending the year with like-for-like sales growth of 6%. Total sales in the chain's 121 stores were reported to be up by 9% Waitrose also set itself the target of becoming the leader in the on line food retailing market by 2001, going head to head with Tesco.

It announced ambitious expansion plans, claiming it will increase its trading space by 18% in 2000, with the opening of six new stores, the acquisition of eleven sites from Somerfield and the expansion of existing stores By January 2001, Waitrose expects to boast some 2.5 million square feet of trading space.

A statistic which leaves me utterly cold.

I don't think Waitrose and statistics go together Waitrose doesn't trade in numbers. It trades, as far as I am concerned, in bottles Bottles with personality.

Waitrose remains a marvellous place to buy wine, even if its wine sales aren't as dynamic or growing as fast as the rest of its business A certain competitor may have said to me that the 'atmosphere in a Waitrose is like an old fashioned chemist's shop', but I see elegance, not clinical stuffiness. If Waitrose is not significantly expanding its share of the wine market, then the problem could be, as I see it, that there are not enough exciting New World wines and not sufficient numbers, if at all, of wine ranges created by the wine department's own initiatives. Wine is something purchased at Waitrose. It is not something conceived or caused to be made 'in the style our customers prefer' – though, that said, there is no doubt that its Good Ordinary Claret, the most honestly labelled wine in the world, owes its softness and seductive structure to overtures by the wine department to Bordeaux to make less austerely tannic Cabernet and Merlot.

Waitrose is an institution and Mr Julian Brind, the most civilised of heads of wine-buying departments, is an institution also. His buyers are also

mini institutions, and I sometimes feel that, apart from Ms Susan McCraith and Ms Dee Blackstock (who manages to wrinkle out of Rheims some sublime Champagnes), some of them wear a tie to bed along with pinstriped pyjamas. Is this a long winded way of saying that Waitrose is a splendid example of the British stiff upper lip? Perhaps. But wine buyers who wear pinstriped pyjamas also exhibit respect, patience and good manners – and not just at bedtime. No supermarket wine buyers are more respected or possess better manners than Waitrose's Even Mr Joe Wadsack, the youngest member of the department and a man who sleeps, I am sure, iconoclastically (and against company policy) in the nude, has acquired a courtly aspect to his demeanour over the past year, and this can only be because of his proximity to gentlemen like Julian, Simon Thorpe, Nick Room, and Waitrose Direct's fine-wine specialist, James Snoxell.

They're all MWs. The lot of them. (Mr Wadsack is the one exception, but he is devotedly studying for the qualification.) You could say this is Waitrose's wine-buying strength, but it can also be seen to be its competitive weakness. MWs, I have heard it said, care more about wine than about people (i.e. customers) and a supermarket wine buyer's finest qualification is a superb nose for what customers will go for – something no MW is taught or can academically acquire.

However, whatever anyone else says, I think we need Waitrose to stay the way it is. I don't want Waitrose to turn into a Tesco or an Asda, and its customers don't either. Keep it up, Julian, boys and gels You're doing a great job (and a lot of your competitors are just plain jealous)

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ARGENTINIAN RED

Familia Zuccardi Q Merlot 1998	16.5	£7–10
Finca el Retiro Malbec, Mendoza 1999	15.5	£5–7
Finca el Retiro Tempranillo, Mendoza 1999	15	£5–7
Sierra Alta Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec, Mendoza 1999	14	£5.00
Sierra Alta Shiraz, Mendoza 1999	16.5	–£5.00
Trivento Sangiovese, Mendoza 1999	15	–£5.00

ARGENTINIAN WHITE

Bodega Lurton Pinot Gris, Mendoza 1999	14.5	–£5.00
Santa Julia Viognier Reserve 1999	16.5	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN RED

Brown Brothers Barbera 1996	14	£5–7
Brown Brothers Nebbiolo 1996	13.5	£7–10
Brown Brothers Tarrango 1999	13	£5–7
Bushmans Crossing Cabernet/Merlot 1999	14	–£5.00
Château Reynella Basket-Pressed Shiraz 1997	17	£10–13
Church Block Cabernet Shiraz Merlot, Wirra Wirra Vineyards 1998	17	£7–10
Clancy's Red 1998	15	£7–10
Deakin Estate Merlot 1999	15.5	£5–7
Eileen Hardy Shiraz 1996	14.5	£20+
Fishermans Bend Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	12	–£5.00
Garry Crittenden Sangiovese 1998	13.5	£10–13
Henschke Keyneton Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1996	12	£13–20
Jindalee Shiraz 1999	14	–£5.00
Kingston Reserve Petit Verdot 1997	12	£13–20
Nanya Vineyard Malbec/Ruby Cabernet 1999	12	–£5.00
Penfolds Organic Merlot/Shiraz/Cabernet 1998	15.5	£7–10
Peter Lehmann The Barossa Shiraz 1998	17	£5–7
Rosemount GSM, McLaren Vale 1996	15	£13–20
Rosemount 'Hill of Gold' Shiraz, Mudgee 1998	17.5	£7–10
Settler's Station Tempranillo 1999	13	£5–7
Stonewell Shiraz, Barossa Valley 1994	14	£13–20
Tatachilla Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot, McLaren Vale 1998	14.5	£7–10
Tatachilla Foundation Shiraz 1997	14	£13–20
Tatachilla Growers Grenache Mataro 1999	10	–£5.00

The Angelus Cabernet Sauvignon, Wirra Wirra 1997	14	£13–20
Wrattonbully Cabernet Sauvignon, Limestone Coast 1998	16	£5–7

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Broken Bridge Chardonnay/Colombard 1999	13	£3.50
Broken Bridge Colombard Chardonnay 1999	14.5	£3.50
Brown Brothers Late Harvested Orange Muscat & Flora 1999 (half-bottle)	16.5	£5–7
Bushmans Crossing Semillon/Chardonnay 1999	13.5	£5.00
Château Tahbilk Unwooded Marsanne, Victoria 1998	16	£5–7
Hardys Stamp of Australia Grenache Shiraz Rosé 1999	13.5	£5.00
Houghton Classic Dry White 1998	15.5	£5–7
Leasingham Domaine Chardonnay 1997	16	£5–7
Nepenthe Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc 1999	14	£7.10
Oxford Landing Sauvignon Blanc 2000	14	£5.00
Pendulum Chardonnay 1999	15	£5.00
Penfolds Bin 95a Chardonnay	13.5	£13–20
Penfolds Clare Valley Organic Chardonnay/ Sauvignon Blanc, 1998 (organic)	15.5	£7.10
Penfolds Old Vine Semillon, Barossa 1998	16	£5–7
Penfolds Rawson's Retreat Bin 202 Riesling 1999	15	£5.00
Petaluma Piccadilly Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£13–20
Tatachilla Sauvignon/ Semillon, McLaren Vale 1999	15	£5.00
Voyager Estate Chardonnay 1997	17.5	£10–13
Wirra Wirra Oaked Chardonnay 1998	12	£7–10

AUSTRIAN WHITE

Bouvier Beerenauslese Munzenrieder 1996	12	£5–7

BULGARIAN RED

Domaine Boyar Merlot/ Gamza, Iambol 1999	15	£3.50

CHILEAN RED

Carmen Nativa Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 (organic)	15	£7.10
Errazuriz Merlot 1999	16	£5–7
Gracia Estate Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva 1997	15	£5–7

Mont Gras Carmenere Reserva 1998	14	£5–7
Valdivieso Barrel Selection Cabernet/ Merlot 1997	16.5	£5–7
Valdivieso Pinot Noir Reserve 1997	16	£5–7

CHILEAN WHITE

Canepa Semillon, Colchagua Valley 1999	16.5	–£5.00
Carmen Vineyards Insigne Gewürztraminer 1999	16	£5–7

ENGLISH RED

Chapel Down Epoch I 1998	10	£5–7

ENGLISH WHITE

Chapel Down Flint Dry 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Summerhill Oaked Dry White NV	12	–£5.00

FRENCH RED

Abbotts Ammonite Côte du Roussillon 1999	15	–£5.00
Beaujolais Villages 1998	12	£5–7
Bistro Rouge VdP d'Oc 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Boulder Creek Red VdP du Vaucluse 1999	15	–£3.50
Cabernet Sauvignon La Cité VdP d'Oc 1998	15.5	–£5.00
Cahors Côtes d'Olt 1999	14	–£5.00
Château Cazal-Viel, Cuvée des Fees St Chinian 1998	16	£5–7
Château de Caraguilhes Corbieres 1998 (half-bottle) (organic)	16	–£5.00
Château de Targe 'Les Tuffes' Saumur Champigny 1997	15.5	£5–7
Château Falfas Côtes de Bourg 1997	14	£7–10
Château Haut d'Allard Côtes de Bourg 1997	15	£5–7
Château Haut Nouchet Pessac-Leognan 1996 (organic)	13	£10–13
Château Leoville Las-Cases 2eme Cru Classé, St Julien 1994	16	£20+
Château Les Tuileries Bordeaux Superieur 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Château Meynard Bordeaux 1998	14.5	–£5.00
Château Palmer 3eme Cru Classé Margaux 1990	12	£20+
Château Pech-Latt, Corbieres 1998	15	–£5.00
Château Saint-Maurice Côtes du Rhône 1998	15	–£5.00
Château Tayac Cru Bourgeois, Margaux 1995	13	£13–20
Clos de Tart Grand Cru Mommessin 1993	15	£20+
Cornas Chapoutier 1997	13	£13–20
Côte Rotie Les Jumelles 1997	13	£20+

Côtes du Rhône 1999, Waitrose	13	£5.00
Côtes du Rhône Villages, Domaine de Cantemerle 1998	14	£5.00
Côtes du Ventoux 1998	14	£5.00
Crozes Hermitage Cave des Clairmonts 1998	14	£5–7
Crozes Hermitage Domaine de Thalabert 1997	13	£10–13
Cuvée Andre St Estephe 1996	14.5	£13–20
Cuvée Eugenie Château Capendu, Corbieres 1998	15	£7–10
Domaine de Courtille Corbieres 1998	16	£7–10
Domaine de Rose Syrah/Merlot, VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£3.50
Domaine du Moulin "The Cabernets", VdP d'Oc 1998	13	£5.00
Fleurie Montreynaud 1999	12	£7–10
Gallerie Tempranillo/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998	15.5	£5.00
Good Ordinary Claret Bordeaux, Waitrose	14	£5.00
Hautes Côtes de Nuits 1998	11	£5–7
L'Enclos Domecque Mourvedre/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998	14	£5.00
La Bernardine Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Chapoutier 1997	14	£13–20
La Colombe Côtes du Rhône 1999 (organic)	14	£5.00
Les Fontanelles Merlot/Syrah VdP d'Oc 1998	15.5	£5.00
Maury, Les Vignerons du Val d'Orbieu NV	16	£5.00
Merchants Bay Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	13.5	£5.00
Mercurery Rouge 1er Cru 'Les Puillets', Château Le Hardi 1998	13	£10–13
Oaked Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999	14	£5.00
Organic Merlot VdP d'Oc 1999	13	£5.00
Prieurs de Foncaire, Buzet Grande Reserve 1998	15.5	£5.00
Saint Roche VdP du Gard 1999 (organic)	13.5	£5.00
Saint-Joseph, Cave de Saint-Desiderat, Cuvée Medaille d'Or 1997	15.5	£7–10
Santenay Bouchard Père 1997	10	£10–13
Saumur Rouge Les Nivieres 1998	14	£5.00
Savigny les Beaune Bouchard Père 1998	15	£10–13
Special Reserve Claret, Cotes de Castillon Limited Edition Millennium Magnum 1996 (magnum)	16	£10–13
St Emilion Yvon Mau NV	13	£5–7
Valreas Côtes du Rhône Chapoutier (half-bottle)	16.5	£3.50

Volnay 1er Cru Les Chevret 1996	13	£20+
Volnay 1er Cry les Caillerets, Clos des 60 Ouvrees, Domaine de la Passe d'Or 1996	14	£20+

FRENCH WHITE

Alsace Gewürztraminer 1998, Waitrose	16.5	£5.7
Alsace Pinot Blanc, Paul Blanck 1999	14	£5.00
Anjou Blanc Ackerman 1999	13	£3.50
Bistro Blanc VdP d'Oc 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Bordeaux Blanc Medium Dry, Yvon Mau NV	12	£3.50
Chablis Gaec des Reugnis 1998	14.5	£7–10
Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos 1996	13	£13–20
Château Carsin Bordeaux Blanc Cuvée Prestige 1997	15.5	£7–10
Château de Caraghuiles Organic Rosé 1999	15.5	£5–7
Château Filhot Grand Cru Classe Sauternes 1989	13.5	£20+
Château Vignal Labrie, Monbazillac 1997	12	£7–10
Clos des Chenoves Blanc 1998	14	£5–7
Domaine de l'Olivette, Corbieres 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Domaine de Planterieu VdP de Gascogne 1999	15	–£5.00
French Connection Viognier VdP d'Oc 1999	15.5	–£5.00
Gewürztraminer Wintzenheim Domaine Zind Humbrecht 1998	16.5	£7–10
Hermitage Le Chevalier de Sterimberg 1997	17.5	£20+
James Herrick Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999	16	–£5.00
L'Enclos Domeque Barrel Fermented Marsanne/ Roussanne VdP d'Oc 1999	16.5	–£5.00
La Cité Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1999	14.5	–£5.00
'Les Fleurs' Chardonnay/ Sauvignon VdP des Cotes de Gascogne 1999	16	£5–7
Maury Vin Doux Naturel NV	14	£5.00
Merchants Bay Sauvignon/Semillon 1998	14	£5.00
Mercurey Blanc Château le Hardi 1998	14	£10–13
Meursault Louis Jadot 1997	12	£13–20
Montagny 1er Cru Bouchard Père 1998	13	£7–10
Muscadet sur Lie 'Fief Gûerin' 1999	14	–£5.00
Muscat Sec Domaine de Provenquiere, VdP d'Oc 1999	16	–£5.00

Muscate de Beaumes de Venise NV (half-bottle)	16	£5.00
Pinot Gris Grand Cru Rangen de Thann Clos St Urbain, Domaine Zind Humbrecht 1996	18.5	£20+
Pouilly Fume Chatelain 1999	12.5	£7–10
Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru Champs Gains 1997	13	£20+
Quincy La Boissiere 1999	13	£5–7
Rosé d'Anjou 1999	13	–£5.00
Saint-Aubin Premier Cru Ropiteau 1998	15	£13–20
Sancerre Blanc Domaine Naudet 1999	13	£7–10
Sancerre Reserve Alfonse Mellot 1998	10	£10–13
Saumur Blanc 'les Andides' Saint Cyr-en-Bourg 1999	14	–£5.00
Sauvignon Blanc 'Les Rochers', VdP des Côtes de Gascogne 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Sauvignon Bordeaux Calvet 1999	13.5	–£5.00
Tokay Pinot Gris Vendanges Tardives, Hugel 1990	18	£20+
Top 40 Chardonnay VdP d'Oc 1999	11	£5–7
Touraine Sauvignon 1999, Waitrose	13.5	–£5.00
Vin Blanc Sec VdT Francais NV, Waitrose	12	–£3.50
Winter Hill Syrah Rosé, VdP d'Oc 1999	14	–£3.50
Winter Hill VdP d'Oc 1999	15	–£3.50

GERMAN WHITE

Devil's Rock Masterpiece, St Ursula 1999	10.5	–£5.00
Johannisberger Klaus Riesling Spatlese, Schloss Schonborn 1990	16.5	£5–7
Kendermann Vineyard Selection Dry Riesling 1998	13.5	–£5.00
Liebfraumilch Rheinhessen 1999, Waitrose	14	–£3.50
Piesporter Michelsburg Mosel-Saar-Ruwer 1999, Waitrose	13	–£3.50
Ruppertsberger Dry Riesling Auslese 1996	13	£5–7
Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 1990	17	£13–20
Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese, JJ Prum 1994	14	£13–20

GREEK RED

Vin de Crete Kourtakis 1998	14	–£3.50

HUNGARIAN WHITE

Deer Leap Dry White 1999	15.5	£3.50
Deer Leap Gewürztraminer, Mor 1999	15.5	–£5.00

Deer Leap Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5.00
Matra Springs 1999	14	£3.50
Matra Springs Dry White 1999	15	£3.50

ITALIAN RED

Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Riserva 1990	13	£20+
Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Vigneti Casterna 1995 (50cl)	16	£7–10
Barolo Terre da Vino 1996	13	£10–13
Bonarda Sentito, Oltrepo Pavese 1999	15.5	£5.00
Brunello di Montalcino Tenuta Nova 1994	14	£13–20
Emporio Barrel Aged Syrah 1998 (Sicilia)	16.5	£5–7
Mezzomondo Negroamaro 1999	16	£5.00
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Umani Ronchi 1998	16	£5.00
Nero d'Avola Syrah, Firriato 1998	14	£5.00
Pendulum Zinfandel 1999	15.5	£5.00
Sangiovese Marche, Waitrose	13	£3.50
Summit Sangiovese di Maremma 1997	16	£7–10
Tenute Marchese Antinori Chianti Classico 1996	16	£10–13
Tenute Marchese Antinori Chianti Classico Riserva 1997	14.5	£10–13
Tenute Marchese Chianti Classico Riserva 1996	16	£10–13
Teroldego Rotaliano, Ca'Vit 1999	14	£5.00
Terra Viva Merlot del Veneto 1999 (organic)	14	£5.00
Vigna Alta Merlot & Cabernet Basilicata 1998	16.5	£5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Catarratto Chardonnay Firriato 1999 (Sicily)	16	£5.00
Frascati Superiore Tenuta delle Marmorelle 1999	15.5	£5.00
Lugana Villa Flora 1999	16.5	£5–7
Mezzo Mondo Chardonnay 1998	14	£5.00
Pinot Grigio Alto Adige San Michele-Appiano 1999	14.5	£5–7
Verdicchio dei Castelli Jesi, Moncaro 1999	16	£5.00

MEXICAN RED

L A Cetto Petite Syrah 1997	16	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND RED

Grove Mill Marlborough Pinot Noir 1998	11	£10–13
Hamilton Russell Pinot Noir 1997	13	£13–20

Jackson Estate Marlborough Pinot Noir 1998	15	£10–13
Montana Cabernet Merlot 1999	15	£5–7
Unison Selection, Hawkes Bay 1998	13.5	£13.20

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Craggy Range Winery Chardonnay, Hawkes Bay 1999	16	£10–13
Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 1999	15	£7–10
Missionvale Chardonnay 1997	14	£10–13
Montana Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Oyster Bay Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£5–7
Tiki Ridge Dry White 1999	12.5	£5.00
Villa Maria Private Bin Chardonnay, Gisborne 1998	14	£5–7
Villa Maria Private Bin Riesling 1999	16	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Terra de Lobos, Quinta do Casal Branco 1999	14	£5.00
Trincadeira Joao Portugal Ramos 1999	16	£7–10
Vila Santa Alentejo 1998	16.5	£7–10
Vinho do Monte, Alentejo 1998	13.5	£5.00

PORTUGUESE WHITE

Quinta de Simaens Vinho Verde 1998	10	£5.00
Terras do Rio Quinta de Abrigada 1998	15	£3.50

ROMANIAN WHITE

Willow Ridge Sauvignon/Feteasca 1999	15.5	£3.50

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Avontuur Estate Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot 1998	13	£5.00
Clos Malverne Basket Pressed Pinotage, Stellenbosch 1999	16	£7–10
Goats Do Roam Fairview, Paarl 1999	15.5	£5.00
Hidden Valley Pinotage, Devon Valley 1996	15	£13–20
Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16.5	£7–10
Spice Route Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1998	16.5	£7–10
Spice Route Flagship Merlot 1998	17	£13–20
Steenberg Merlot, Constantia 1998	15	£7–10
Thelema Mountain Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	14	£13–20

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Culemborg Cape Dry White 1999	14	~£3.50
Culemborg Unwooded Chardonnay, Western Cape 1999	15	~£5.00
Fairview Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 1999	16	~£5.00
Spice Route Abbotsdale Colombard/Chenin Blanc 1999	15	£7–10
Springfield Sauvignon Blanc Special Cuvée 1999	15.5	£5–7
Steenberg Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£7–10
Thelema Mountain Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 1999	17	£10–13
Warwick Estate Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1999	17.5	£5–7

SPANISH RED

Agramont Tempranillo/ Cabernet Sauvignon, Navarra 1996	14.5	£5–7
Espiral Oaked Tempranillo 1998	15	£5–7
Espiral Tempranillo/ Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	16	~£5.00
La Rioja Alta Gran Reserve 904, 1989	13.5	£13–20
Torres Gran Sangre de Toro Reserva 1996	16	£5–7
Totally Tinto Tempranillo, La Mancha NV	15	~£3.50
Totally Two Thousand Tempranillo NV (magnum)	15.5	~£3.50
Vina Fuerte Garnacha, Calatayud 1999	16	~£5.00

SPANISH WHITE

Albarino Pazo de Seoane, Rias Baixas 1999	15.5	£7–10
Espiral Macabeo/ Chardonnay 1998	15.5	~£5.00
Lustau Moscatel de Chipiona NV	15	~£5.00
Vinas del Vero Chardonnay 1998	14	~£5.00

URUGUAYAN RED

Pisano Family Reserve Tannat 1998	14.5	£7–10

USA RED

Bonterra Vineyards Merlot 1997 (organic)	16.5	£7–10
Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	15.5	£5–7
Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	13	£20+
Stags Leap Cabernet Sauvignon 1995	16	£20+
Stonebridge Cellars Zinfandel 1997	13	£5–7

Yorkville Cellars Cabernet Franc 1997 (organic)	14	£7–10
Yorkville Petit Verdot 1997	16	£7–10

USA WHITE

Acacia Chardonnay 1995	14.5	£10–13
Fetzer Unoaked Chardonnay 1999	14.5	£5–7
Fetzer Viognier 1999	15	£7–10

FORTIFIED WINES

10 Year Old Tawny Port, Waitrose	14	£10–13
Apostoles Palo Cortado Muy Viejo (half-bottle)	18.5	£10–13
Apostoles Palo Cortado Oloroso (half-bottle)	15.5	£7–10
Comte de Lafont Pineau des Charentes	15	£5–7
Dry Fly Amontillado	12	£5–7
Fino Sherry, Waitrose	15.5	£5.00
Fonseca Traditional LBV 1983	15	£13–20
Matusalem Oloroso Dulce Muy Viejo (half-bottle)	18.5	£10–13
Oloroso Sherry, Waitrose	13	£5.00
Solera Jerezana Dry Amontillado, Waitrose	16	£5–7
Solera Jerezana Dry Oloroso, Waitrose	16.5	£5–7
Solera Jerezana Old Oloroso, Waitrose	16.5	£5–7
Vintage Warre Quinta da Cavadinha 1987	17.5	£13–20

SPARKLING WINES

Alexandre Bonnet Brut Rosé NV (France)	12	£13–20
Banrock Station Sparkling Shiraz NV (Australia)	17	£7–10
Brut Vintage 1990, Waitrose	13	£13–20
Cava Brut NV, Waitrose	15.5	£5.00
Champagne Blanc de Blancs NV, Waitrose	15	£13–20
Champagne Blanc de Noirs NV, Waitrose	15	£10–13
Champagne Brut NV, Waitrose	12.5	£13–20
Champagne Fleury 1993	13	£30+
Champagne Fleury Brut NV	18.5	£13–20
Chandon Argentina Brut NV	15	£7–10
Chandon Australia Brut NV	15.5	£7–10
Chapel Hill Pinot Noir/ Chardonnay NV	15	£5.00
Charles Heidsieck Champagne Blanc de Blancs 1982	20	£20+
Charles Heidsieck Reserve Mise en Cave en 1993	13.5	£20+
Clairette de Die Tradition (half-bottle) (France)	14	£5–7

Cremant de Bourgogne Blanc de Noirs, Lugny	14	£5–7
Cremant de Bourgogne Rosé NV (France)	14	£7–10
Cuvée Royale Blanquette de Limoux NV	13	£5–7
Duc de Marre Special Cuvée Champagne Brut Non Vintage	13.5	£13–20
Jacob's Creek Sparkling Chardonnay/Pinot Noir NV (Australia)	15	£5–7
Le Mesnil Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Champagne Brut Non Vintage	14	£13–20
Lindauer Brut NV (New Zealand)	14	£7–10
Saumur Brut NV, Waitrose	14	£5–7
Seaview Brut NV	14	£5–7
Seaview Brut Rosé NV	13.5	£5–7
Sparkling Burgundy NV (France)	13	£5–7
Taittinger Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs 1990	13	£20+

SEE STOP PRESS SECTION AT END OF BOOK FOR LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO THIS RETAILER'S RANGE.

WINE CELLAR

My advice, in order to appreciate the tasty nub of this retailer, is to get your laughing gear around some of Mr David Vaughan's southern French wines. Mr Vaughan is the hero here, battling solo for so many years buying wine, but lately he has acquired, I believe, an assistant, although I've yet to see hide or hair of her/him.

Wine Cellar is a modest set of 70 wine shops spread over the land. It does not innovate by developing its own brands, via own label wine ranges for example, but relies simply on wines purchased by the estimable Mr Vaughan. The Wine Cellar wine list is dominated by major brands like Penfolds, Gallo, Skalli, KWV, certain Chilean and New Zealand setups (Errázuriz, for example, and Villa Maria), Mondavi, Fetzer and so on The French wines I admire you'll have to search the list for (because, I would guess, they don't pay a premium to the retailer for receiving star billing).

Wine Cellar is owned by a holding company called Parisa, which is keen to prove itself but strapped for the vast reserves of cash, or leverage potential, to do so on any huge scale. There were suggestions it might bid for part of the 1st Quench estate, but this was pure speculation, more likely fantasy, along the lines of Millwall dreaming of buying David Beckham

Parisa also operates fourteen Parisa Café Bars and says it wants to open more These places offer customers the chance to choose from 250 wines at normal off licence prices or to buy a bottle of wine plus £3 corkage and drink it with food in the café It also runs Right Choice, a chain of 65 outlets in the north and Midlands offering groceries, drinks, videos and newsprint. There used to be outfits called Cellar 5 and Berkeley Wines but they got the chop Parisa also removed Night Vision, its off licence/video store format, from its portfolio of retail fascias.

Booze Buster is still going and it is, like Spar, a franchise. Individuals buy the Booze Buster concept, giving them access to Parisa's central buying powers, and are thus enabled, in the company's own words, to 'compete with supermarkets'. This blueprint sounds grand but since most of the top-selling wines at supermarkets are around £3 – just a little less in some cases, just a touch more in others – and are, most crucially, own-label ranges or ranges that the supermarkets themselves have caused to be

created in their various countries of origin, it is difficult to see how anyone running a Booze Buster can even offer the same wines as supermarkets except, of course, the ranges from the big companies like Penfolds, Gallo, Skalli, KWV, certain Chilean and New Zealand setups (Errázuriz, for example, and Villa Maria), Mondavi, Fetzer and so on. Booze Busters do not, on this basis, compete with supermarkets. They simply compete with small off-licences.

The Parisa Group talks proudly It claims to be 'recognised as the most innovative and successful UK company in its sector'. Questions loom large immediately now. Recognised by whom? Innovative in what way? Successful how? And what in heaven's name is the sector in which it can justifiably claim all these terms of self congratulation? The answer is that Parisa is the only company, of any size, in its sector, and this sector is the one it has itself termed the 'specialist drinks retailing and leisure' sector. Once you conjure up your own pigeonhole, which no one else fits, then it is no hard job, if you stay solvent, to claim innovation and success in it. As far as this joker is concerned, this single wine guide writer, Parisa is just a booze retailer and as such it has to be stacked up against everyone else, from Oddbins to Unwins, Tesco to Marks & Spencer. On this more sober, realistic basis, Parisa has a lot of catching up to do (though patently not in hype, in which spicy but superficial augmentation it excels).

Well, the Parisa coffee bar/restaurant/wine shop format has been done before, but only by individuals running their own establishments. It has never been used as an idea for a nationwide chain, and it remains to be seen whether it can work on this scale. All we're talking about here is Café Rouge and Nicolas combined, nothing more original than that (though it needs saying here there is very little genuine invention and true innovation in wine and food retailing and the single company which has been most dynamically innovative is McDonald's).

I have not eaten in one of these Parisa cafés but I welcome the idea because I am a great fan of eating out but I don't like paying obscene restaurant mark-ups on my wine. However, I have yet to visit but every time I cycle past the Putney branch, which isn't, admittedly, very often nowadays, I've just seen a few dull-looking young people, far too young to put up with a crusty old bastard like me, puffing away on fags inside what looks like a routinely outfitted, mass-designed bar like the deadly All Bar One setup (which is fearfully po-faced).

Parisa has relaunched its website in a bid to be 'at the forefront' of Internet selling. It will be 'radically different', so I'm told The site will offer

around 700 wines with 48 hour delivery. This is yet to come on-stream at the time of writing, but I wish it well Wine retailers who operate e-commerce sites have the advantage that duff wines can easily be returned to the branches. How can you send a wine tainted by its cork back via the Internet? Indeed, I posed this question in my *Guardian* column, when ItsWine.com were offering a bargain deal on a Penfolds wine and Rodney Kearns, purchasing director of this e-commerce retailer, was pleased to write to me saying 'YES – we have a money-back policy on duff bottles and we make an instant refund via the customer's credit card. We do not ask for the bottle back (within reason).' Ah, within reason. Yes, of course.

Shall we tiptoe away from this subject, and this retailer, now? Drink the wines I rate highly in the listing which follows. If you don't like them write to me c/o the *Guardian*, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and tell me I'm a prat Just as Mr Haghighi, the company's MD, is in all probability, doing right now.

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www.parisa.com

AUSTRALIAN RED

Cleveland Brien Shiraz/Cabernet 1994	11	£7–10
Cleveland Macedon Pinot Noir 1996	10	£10–13
Jim Barrie McCrae Wood Shiraz 1996	14.5	£13–20
Penfolds Rawsons Retreat Bin 35 Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz/Ruby Cabernet 1998	14	£5–7
Rosemount Estate Grenache/Shiraz 1999	15	£5–7
Three Steps Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	13.5	£5–7
Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16	£13–20

AUSTRALIAN WHITE

Capel Vale Verdelho 1999	16	£7–10
Hardys Stamp of Australia Chardonnay Semillon 1999	15	£5.00
Heggies Chardonnay 1997	16	£7–10
Three Steps Chardonnay 1998	13.5	£5–7
Wolf Blass President's Selection McLaren Vale Chardonnay 1997	12	£7–10

BULGARIAN RED

Domaine Boyar Cabernet Sauvignon NV	13.5	£3.50
Domaine Boyar Cabernet/Merlot 1998	14	£3.50
Domaine Boyar Reserve Merlot/Gamza 1996	14.5	£5.00

CHILEAN RED

Casa del Bosque Merlot 1998	12	£5–7
Cono Sur Merlot 1999	13.5	£5–7
Mapocho Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	13	£5.00
Mont Gras Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	14.5	£5–7
Mont Gras Quatro 1998	15	£5–7
Valdivieso Barrel Select Merlot 1999	15.5	£5–7
Valdivieso Pinot Noir Reserve 1997	16	£5–7

CHILEAN WHITE

Casa del Bosque Sauvignon Blanc 1998	10	£5–7
La Palmeria Chardonnay 1999	16	£5.00

FRENCH RED

Abbotts Cumulus Shiraz Minervois 1998	16.5	£5–7
Big Frank's Cabernet Frank 1998	14	£5–7
Château Agnel Minervois 1998	16	£5.00
Château Bonhomme Minervois 1997	13	£5–7
Château Cotes de Bellevue, Côtes de Bourg 1996	13.5	£5–7
Château Grand Berthaud, Premieres Côtes de Blaye 1997	16	£5–7
Château La Chapelle, St Chinian 1998	14	£5.00
Château Lamargue Costieres de Nimes Grand Reserve 1998	16	£5.00
Château Quinsac Bellevue, Bordeaux 1998	16	£5.00
Château Saint-Germain Bordeaux Superieur 1997	13.5	£5–7
Château Saint-Gilles, 1er Gote de Bordeaux 1998	14.5	£5.00
Domaine Coste Blanque, Montpeyroux, Coteaux du Languedoc 1998	17	£5–7

Domaine de Villemajou, Corbieres 1998	16	£5–7
Domaine des Amandiers, Côtes du Roussillon Villages 1998	15	£5.00
Domaine du Bosquet Merlot VdP d'Oc 1998	16	£5–7
Domaine du Grand Bosc, Fitou 1998	15.5	£5.00
James Herrick Cuvée Simone VdP d'Oc 1998	16.5	£5.00
La Chasse du Pape Côtes du Rhône 1998	16.5	£3.00
Old Git Grenache Syrah 1999	13.5	£5.00
Rhone Valley Red VdP de Vaucluse NV	13	£5.00
Shiraz Foncalieu 1998	16	£5.00
Tastevinage Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits Yves Chaley 1997	10	£7–10
Thierry & Guy Utter Bastard Syrah 1998	14.5	£5–7
Vacqueyras Les Agapes 1998	16.5	£5–7
Wild Pig Barrel Reserve Shiraz 1998	14	£5.00

FRENCH WHITE

Château l'Ermitage Blanc, Costieres de Nimes 1998	16	£5.00
Château l'Ermitage Rosé, Costieres de Nimes 1998	15.5	£5.00
Château Lacroix Rosé 1999	13	£5–7
Château Lacroix Semillon/Sauvignon 1998	13.5	£5–7
Domaine l'Orgeril Reserve Chardonnay, VdP d'Oc 1997	12	£5–7
Orchid Vale Medium Dry Chardonnay 1998	13	£5.00
Rhone Valley White, VdP de Vaucluse NV	11	£5.00
Sancerre Seduction Vieilles Vignes 1998	12	£10–13

GREEK RED

Hatzimichalis Cabernet Sauvignon 1997	16	£7–10
Sillogi Lafazanis Red 1997	13	£5–7
St George Skouras, Nemea 1996	15.5	£5–7

GREEK WHITE

Hatzimichalis Chardonnay 1998	12	£7–10
Sillogi Lafazanis White 1998	12	£5–7

ITALIAN RED

D'Istinto Sangiovese Merlot 1998 (Sicily)	14	£5.00

ITALIAN WHITE

Monte Tenda Soave 1998	12	£5.00

NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Delegat's Reserve Chardonnay, Barrel Fermented 1998	14.5	£7–10
Matua Valley Chardonnay 1999	14	£5–7
Matua Valley Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16	£5–7
Montana Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 1998	16	£7–10
Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 1999	16.5	£5–7

PORTUGUESE RED

Belafonte Baga, Beiras 1998	14	£5.00
Portada Tinto Estremadura 1995	16	£5.00
Terra Boa 1997	12	£5.00

SOUTH AFRICAN RED

Jordan Merlot 1998	16	£7–10
L'Avenir Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	13	£7–10
Neil Joubert Cabernet Sauvignon 1998	13	£5–7
Neil Joubert Pinotage 1998	16	£5–7
Paradyskloof Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1997	13.5	£5–7
Simonsig Pinotage 1998	16	£5–7

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE

Jordan Chardonnay 1998	16.5	£7–10

SPANISH RED

Montalvo Reserva Rioja 1994	14.5	£7–10
Ondarre Reserva Rioja 1994	13	£7–10
Ondarre 'Rivallana' Crianza Rioja 1996	13	£5–7
Valdetore Calatayud Grenache 1998	15	£5.00
Vinas del Vero Merlot 1997	15.5	£5–7

SWISS RED

Pinot Noir Trilogy 1996	12	£5–7

USA RED

Clos du Val Le Clos NV	14	£7–10
Fetzer Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara 1996	13	£5–7
Fetzer Valley Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon 1996	16.5	£5–7
Gallo Sonoma Barrelli Creek Cabernet Sauvignon 1994	15.5	£10–15
Gallo Sonoma County Pinot Noir 1995	13.5	£7–10
Gallo Sonoma Frei Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon 1994	14	£10–13
Mondavi Coastal Merlot 1997	16	£7–10

USA WHITE

Gallo Sonoma County Chardonnay 1995	10	£7–10
Quady Essensia Orange Muscat, California 1996 (half-bottle)	16	£5–7
Quady Starboard Batch 88, California (half-bottle)	15	£5–6.00

SPARKLING WINES

Jansz Tasmanian NV	12	£7–10
Pelorus NV (New Zealand)	17	£10–13

PART 4

TOP TENS

THE TOP TEN PRE-COITAL MASTERPIECES

(I.E. APERITIFS, PRE PRANDIAL TIPPLES, LIBATIONS FOR THE LIBIDO)

SPARKLING WINE **Charles Heidsieck Champagne Blanc de Blancs 1982, Waitrose** 20 £89.99

Perfect Champagne. As good as it is possible for Chardonnay to get with bubbles. It is perfectly mature, rich and complex but finally dry and delicate. It is so elegant it defines what Champagne is. Only from Waitrose Direct

SPARKLING WINE **Pelorus Brut 1995, Unwins** 18 £12.49

Better than Krug It's got beautifully smoky fruit, richness with elegance, bite with delicacy.

SPARKLING WINE **Pelorus Brut NV (New Zealand), Sainsbury's** 17 £12.99

One of the most richly elegant bottles on the planet in this blend (almost all Chardonnay). It has to be compared with absurdities like Krug to get some idea of the value here.

CHILEAN RED **Chilean Merlot 1999, Somerfield** 17 £4.49

It ignites in the mouth like a leather and spicy cherry/blackcurrant grenade Hugely impressive depth and richness here.

FORTIFIED WINES **Lustau Old East India Sherry, Booths, Unwins** 17 £9.99 10.99

Magnificent name, recalling the excesses of empire, just as the intense sweet fruit (molasses and butterscotch with crème brûlée overtones) is redolent of excess around Victorian dinner tables A taste of history. Quite marvellous stuff.

FORTIFIED WINES **Manzanilla, Asda** 17 £4.97

A staggeringly well endowed, aromatic, yet subtle sherry of immense charm and richness. Unusually well textured and soft (uniquely so, I suggest) and so warm and approachable it must convert those who previously found the tealeaf and hard edge of this style of wine too austere.

AUSTRALIAN WHITE **Oxford Landing Limited Release Viognier 1999, Majestic** 17 £5.99

One of the greatest Viogniers in the world in this vintage. The lingering apricots and gentle spice are remarkable.

NEW ZEALAND WHITE **Montana Reserve Chardonnay 1999, Thresher** 17 £7.99

Intensely classy and enormously creamy and rich without being too ripe and obvious. A provocative blend of smoky melon and fine acids. Has elegance, elongation and ease of effort.

NEW ZEALAND WHITE **Te Mata Estate Chardonnay 1999, Thresher** 17 £8.49

A lot of money but a lot of wine. It has old-fashioned vegetality of the Montrachet kind and limpid acids of the Kiwi kind. The marriage is superb: angular, classy, finely wrought and outstandingly, compactly balanced. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE **Jordan Chardonnay 1998, Booths, Unwins, Waitrose** 16.5 £9.99

Melon and lime yoghurt with a hint of walnut. An individual approach to the Chardonnay riddle and an original solution. Deliciously so

THE TOP TEN REFLECTIVE PURSUIT BOTTLES

(I.E. WINES AS STIMULATING COMPANIONS FOR THE MIND)

ITALIAN RED **Aglianico del Vulture 1997, Majestic** 18 £9.99

A real mineral-tinged treat. The elegance, the concentrated ripeness, the typical Vulture richness. A beautiful, confident, stunning mouthful.

FRENCH WHITE **Bott-Geyl Gewürztraminer Grand Cru Sonnenglanz 1998, Majestic** 17.5 £15.99

About as good as young Gewürz gets: pears, peaches, rose petals, raspberries and honey and intriguing acids Left for seven to eight years it'll rate twenty.

CHILEAN RED **Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1997, Unwins, Tesco, Safeway** 17.5 £9.99

Wonderfully expressive of herbs, spice, vegetal fruit and ripe tannins

CHILEAN RED **35 Sur Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Asda, Sainsbury's** 17 £4.49

Utter magic. Dark, rich, firm yet supple, wonderfully seriously fruity (leather, spice, blackcurrants) and hugely lingering. Brilliant for the money, quite brilliant.

AUSTRALIAN RED **Church Block Cabernet Shiraz/Merlot, Wirra Wirra Vineyards 1998, Oddbins** 17 £8.99

Wonderful brisk tannins coat the chocolate and Cassis fruit. Marvellous stuff. Benchmark blend.

AUSTRALIAN RED **Clancy's Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot/Cabernet Franc 1998, Unwins, Safeway** 17 £7.99

Perfection at its peak almost. Will it rate higher if cellared and left to mature? How can it? It has wonderfully integrated generous tannins and plum/cherry/blackberry fruit.

USA WHITE **Coastal Chardonnay, Robert Mondavi 1997, Sainsbury's, Unwins** 17 £9.99

Beautiful biscuity texture, subtle vegetal fruit and very elegant on the finish. 60 stores.

SPANISH RED **Costers del Gravet Celler de Capcanes 1998, Majestic** 17 £8.99

Huge yet delicate, expansive yet lithe, effortless yet eager to delight A very concentrated, compelling amalgam of multi-layered fruit, fine tannins and superb acids, which all work dynamically to produce a rousing, tenacious finish.

SOUTH AFRICAN RED **Fairview Pinotage 1999, Sainsbury's** 17 £5.99

One of South Africa's, perhaps the world's, most joyously juicy yet seriously delicious and multi-layered wines It has wonderful graduated texture, a middle wallop of berries and a striking, witty finish.

SOUTH AFRICAN RED **Spice Route Flagship Merlot 1998, Sainsbury's, Waitrose** 17 £11.99

A big, rich special occasion Merlot of massive depth, lingering tannins and huge food compatibility.

THE TOP TEN *VINS POUR LES GRANDES BOUFFES*

(I.E. IMPRESSIVE BOTTLES FOR FESTIVE MEALS AND IMPORTANT DINNERS)

ITALIAN RED **Amarone Valpolicella Tedeschi 1996, Majestic** 18 £12.99
One of the more perfect specimens of this extravagant breed. Lively, serious, hugely amusing, concentrated and unites the joyous elements of wine (sugar, acid, tannin) into something original and very fine. Liquorice, prunes and hedgerows: they're all there.

CHILEAN RED **Errázuriz Cabernet Sauvignon, El Ceibo Estate, Aconcagua 1998, Safeway** 17.5 £5.99
Wonderful baked, brown fruit here, full of fleshiness contained by a delicious shellac of prime tannins. Immense drinkability combined with sublime, provocative richness. A stunning wine.

FORTIFIED WINE **González Byass Matusalem NV (half-bottle), Sainsbury's** 17.5 £10.23
Wonderful! One of the world's great dessert wines. The texture and the colour of engine oil, it has a butterscotch and crème brûlée sweetness and a complex smoky honeyed edge. Selected stores.

ITALIAN RED **Amarone della Valpolicella Zenato 1995, Thresher** 17 £17.99
Liquorice, figs, ripe cherries and damsons, and marvellous tannins. Even so, I'd cellar it for five or six years and see it reach, perhaps, perfection at twenty points. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

SOUTH AFRICAN RED **Bellingham Pinotage 1999, Somerfield** 17 £5.49
Stunning tannins! Even Lafite doesn't get tannins this exciting, this tasty, this deep. Limited distribution.

FRENCH WHITE **Château Vignal Labrie, Monbazillac 1997, Waitrose** 17 £8.99
Most individual and exotic specimen. Has a gorgeous waxy texture and very ripe, complex undertones. Real whack of sweet fruit on the finish.

FRENCH RED **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Château de la Grande Gardiole 1998, Sainsbury's** 17 £12.49
Expensive but mountainous. Intense richness and herby hauteur. Selected stores.

FRENCH RED **Chaume Arnaud Domaine Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1998 (organic), Booths** 17 £7.49

It develops on the palate with insidious deliciousness providing herbs, savoury tannins, a hint of rustic orchards, and a deal of characterful texture. Marvellous stuff.

CHILEAN RED **Cono Sur Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1998, Somerfield** 17 £6.49

Nothing reserved about the fruit. It pulsates with generosity and tongue-lashing tannic tenacity.

ARGENTINIAN RED **Famiglia Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon, San Rafael 1996, Oddbins** 17 £15.99

Has such superb multi layered, faintly lush Cassis and cheroot tinged fruit that it surprises the palate by its developing richness on the tongue. A very classy red.

THE TOP TEN SUPER-MODEL WINES

(I.E. EXCEPTIONALLY ELEGANT WHITE WINES)

CHILEAN WHITE **Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Chardonnay 1997, Oddbins** 18.5 £9.99

Utterly magical oily texture, huge depth of woodily creamy fruit and a magnificent finish. It is a great wine at any price and hugely drinkable and food friendly. It has everything great Meursault has and doubles it. Classicists (aka snobs) will say it's OTT and the malolactic influence and the wood are too oppressive. But I think the fruit triumphs.

FRENCH WHITE **Pinot Gris Grand Cru Rangen de Thann Clos St-Urbain, Domaine Zind Humbrecht 1996, Waitrose** 18.5 £35.00

Stunning elegant spiciness and richness here. Extraordinary depths of deliciousness. Only from Waitrose Direct.

FRENCH WHITE **Hermitage Le Chevalier de Sterimberg 1997, Waitrose** 17.5 £20+

The acme of French arrogance. Has little fruit but mighty dry yet oily-textured richness. Only from Waitrose Direct.

CHILEAN WHITE **Montes Alpha Chardonnay 1998, Morrisons** 17.5 £8.99
Chile's Montrachet if that isn't to insult it. It has a creamy vegetality, beautiful smooth texture, subtle complex charms on the tongue, and a lingering smokiness as it descends and hits the soul.

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE **Vergelegen Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Sainsbury's** 17.5 £9.99
Outpoints Sancerre at the same price by ten to one. It's subtly grassy, very concentrated (melon and soft, spiced gooseberry) and the finish is sublime. 30 stores.

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE **Warwick Estate Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1999, Waitrose** 17.5 £6.99
The best value Chardonnay in the world. Lovely creamy woodiness, alert acids underpinning good melon/vegetal fruit and it'll get more like Montrachet as it ages over the next five years.

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE **Call of the African Eagle Chardonnay 1999, Sainsbury's** 17 £6.99
Beautifully natural and pure seeming as elegant as a nun's wimple. The fruit is quite remarkably refined and rich, complex, seamlessly stitched and elegant. 120 stores.

CHILEAN WHITE **Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay 1998, Oddbins, Unwins** 17 £6.99
Breathtakingly elegant, subtle, complex, rich and so quaffable it has undertones of ambrosia and choirs of angels.

CHILEAN WHITE **Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Chardonnay 1997, Thresher, Victoria Wine** 17 £4.99
Beautifully ornate fruit, oily and rippling with multi flavoured riches, and the acidity gives the whole structure backbone and precision.

NEW ZEALAND WHITE **Church Road Reserve Chardonnay 1998, Thresher** 17 £11.99
Such extreme elegance and controlled fruitiness make the taste buds weep with pleasure. Marvellous texture and big finish Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

THE TOP TEN TIPPLES TO ENJOY BEFORE FACING A FIRING SQUAD

(I.E. GORGEOUS REDS TO STIFFEN THE SINEWS AND SUMMON UP THE BLOOD)

SPANISH RED **Alvaro Palacios Finca Dofi Priorat 1996, Thresher** 18 £59.99

£60! Sixty quid! Yes, but it may well be one of the most nigh-perfect red wines in Spain. It is hugely elegant and forceful. The tannins are like gold dust and the finish is sublime. A truly exciting world class wine, the unique product of an obsessed individual. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

ITALIAN RED **Amarone della Valpolicella Via Nova 1997, Thresher, Victoria Wine** 18 £9.99

Superb modern Amarone with classic overtones of liquorice, fig, raspberry, blackcurrant, herbs, jam, tannins and rich acids. The texture is thick and balsamic and lingering. Yet, withal, this is not, in spite of 14.5% of alcohol, a bruising experience. It is very elegant and polished.

FRENCH RED **Domaine de l'Arneillaud Cairanne Côtes du Rhône-Villages 1999, Unwins** 18 £5.99

Magnificent herby potency and extremely deep elegance here. Has world class tannins and intense richness.

CHILEAN RED **Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Merlot, Rapel 1998, Oddbins** 17.5 £13.99

An immense construct which as the thoughtful taster gargles with it around the molars is like some game sauce of quite unusual savoury, ripe, then sweet, then dry complexity. A truly marvellous wine.

CHILEAN RED **Errázuriz Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Unwins, Thresher, Victoria Wine** 17.5 £5.99

Stunning lushness yet extruded elegance – superb texture and heart stoppingly delicious blackcurrant richness

FRENCH RED **Château Trignon Côtes du Rhône-Villages Sablet Ramillades 1998, Unwins** 17.5 £6.99

Absolutely compelling richness and beautifully earthy tannins. The quintessence of elegant rusticity. Marvellous stuff! From nose to throat it's terrific, taut, tenacious.

FRENCH RED **Château Flauguergues Coteaux du Languedoc 1998** 17.5 £6.99

Very elegant. The tannins and the fruit are deliciously melded and softened one into the other and the finish is excellent. A very serious yet fun-to-drink wine.

USA RED **Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1997 (organic), Asda, Sainsbury's** 17 £8.99

Superbly California style: warm, rich, pulsating, brilliant tannins, great ripe yet serious dry/sweet fruit. Absolutely marvellous stuff.

FRENCH RED **Château de Valcombe, Costières de Nîmes 1998, Oddbins** 17 £5.49

Cheroots, hedgerows, garrigues, leather, smoke, tannins, hint of old wood – enough for you?

FRENCH RED **Château Grand Escalion, Costières de Nîmes 1998, Oddbins** 17 £5.99

A lot like Château de Valcombe except it's more difficult to get your tongue round the name.

PART 5

STOP PRESS

ASDA

Temple Bruer Shiraz/ Malbec 1998, Australian, Red 16.5 £5–7
A wonderfully adult blend of rich jammy Shiraz and dry, tannic Malbec. The marriage is harmonious and energetic, food friendly and deliciously deep.

Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 2000, South African, Red 16 £5.00
Huge juice and tannins. Lovely meaty edge.

Kumala Chenin Chardonnay 2000, South African, White 15 £5.00
Biting, clean, nicely fruity.

CO-OP

Valentin Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon 1997, Argentinian, Red 16 £5–7
Very big and rich and soft and gently spicy with big tannins.

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1998, Chilean, Red 17 £7–10
Deep savoury riches tantalise the tongue and tighten the throat as the tannins ooze down.

MAJESTIC

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1998, Chilean, Red 17 £7–10
Deep savoury riches tantalise the tongue and tighten the throat as the tannins ooze down.

Yellowglen Pinot Noir Chardonnay NV (Australia), Sparkling Wine/Champagne 16 £7–10
A great bargain! Superb class and subtly rich fruit. This blend is a terrific improvement on the last (cf the main Majestic section of this book).

MORRISONS

Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay 1999, Australian, White 16 £5–7
One of its best vintages for years. Beautifully couth fruit of texture, style and controlled lushness. Deliciously succulent.

Kumala Sauvignon Blanc/Colombard 2000, South African, White 15 £5.00
Terrific rich freshness.

ODDBINS

Fabre Montmayor Cabernet Sauvignon, Lujan de Cuyo 1997, Argentinian, Red 16.5 £5–7
Vibrant, richly textured fruit, a very vague hint of Cabernet pepperiness (just a nod to varietal expression in this respect) and lashings of chocolate fruit. Dazzling turn of wit on the tongue.

Fabre Montmayor Merlot, Lujan de Cuyo 1997, Argentinian, Red 17 £5–7
Superb, almost complete in its harmony of fruit, acids and tannins. Immediately charming (nay, seductive).

Bleasdale 'Bremer View Vineyard' Shiraz 1998, Australian, Red 16 £5–7
Customary open-hearted Aussie welcome. Here's savoury tannin too, a hint of coriander to spice it up, and an engaging, molar-hugging texture.

Wirra Wirra RSW Shiraz 1998, Australian, Red 18 £13–20
Elegant, huge, potent yet polite. World class.

Bleasdale 'Bremer View Vineyard' Verdelho 1999, Australian, White 16.5 £5–7
Wonderfully subtle riches here - spicy yet not overt, soft yet not a pushover.

Nepenthe Vineyards Lenswood Semillon 1998, Australian, White 16.5 £7–10
Superb texture and purity of tone here. The Semillon is gloriously vindicated as a complex, lingering, stand-alone grape. Very stylish finish of gently creamy melon, raspberry and lychee.

Preece Chardonnay 1999, Australian, White 16 £5–7
Very deep and flavoursome and hugely food-friendly. Quaffable? If you can take so much excitement crammed into a glass: melons, nuts, pears and yoghurt.

Wirra Wirra Sauvignon Blanc 2000, Australian, White 16 £7–10
Very grassy and concentrated gooseberry.

Cono Sur Pinot Noir Reserve 1999, Chilean, Red 16 £5–7
Chewy, ripe, thick, aromatic, tannic, lingering. Volnay was never like this!

Cono Sur Reserva Merlot 1999, Chilean, Red 16.5 £5–7
Incredibly thickly knitted and chewy. Great tannins!

Errazuriz Merlot Reserva, Don Maximiano Estate Aconcagua, 1998, Chilean, Red 16.5 £7–10
Like drinking a soft velvet glove suffused with essence of cassis.

Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1999, Chilean, Red 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous savoury juice with rich tannins.

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1999, Chilean, White 16 £5–7
Superb texture and ripe, plump fruit.

Château de l'Engarran Quetton Saint-Georges, Coteaux de Languedoc 1998, French, Red 17.5 £7–10
Rather exquisitely refined at first smell and sip and then a hint of a rugged, misspent youth appears to garnish the soft plummy fruit with bite, tannin and longevity of performance.

Corbieres Alain Grignon 1999, French, Red 15.5 £5.00
Beautiful sweet hedgerow fruit, a touch of earth (tannins in this instance) and a good firm finish.

Domaine de Montpezat Les Enclos, VdP d'Oc 1998, French, Red 16 £5–7
Raisiny aroma, and oddly oaky, and the thick jammy fruit is then sweet but slightly nutty and full and rich. Marvellous veggie stew wine.

Minervois Alain Grignon 1999, French, Red 16 £5.00
Tremendous vibrancy, almost cassis-like, here. Has subtle spice and supple tannins. A bargain.

Saint Chinian Alain Grignon 1999, French, Red 15.5 £5.00
A soft, hugely quaffable wine of character and style.

Albert Mann Vieilles Vignes Tokay Pinot Gris 1999, French, White 16.5 £10–13
Lot of money best spent by someone with the patience to wait four or five

years for this aromatic, apricot rich wine to develop some fascinating 20-point charms. However, it's already nutty and complex enough for most palates, perhaps.

Mirambelo Heza Creta Olympias 1998, Greek, Red 16 ~£5.00
Wow! I swallow my words, chewing on them with pleasure. Crete can turn out terrific red wine - deep, dry, fruity, warmly tannic.

Xerolithia 1999, Greek, White 15.5 ~£5.00
Makes a marvellously rich change from Chardonnay. Great with food (chicken, grilled tuna). Has real style and substance.

Mezzomondo Negroamaro 1999, Italian, Red 16 ~£5.00
Brilliant value food wine with rich, herby fruit and delicious spicy tannins. Has a first-class texture and concentration of flavours.

Kumala Merlot Reserve 1999, South African, Red 16.5 £7–10
Superb!

Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, South African, Red 16.5 £7–10
Compellingly concentrated and classy and generous.

Vinum Cabernet Sauvignon, Stellenbosch 1999, South African, Red 16 £5–7
Superbly racy and softly spiced Terrific texture, deep and all-enveloping, and a lingering, plummy richness of great charm. Developing beautifully in bottle since the summer (cf the main Oddbins section of this book).

Yonder Hill Merlot, Stellenbosch 1998, South African, Red 16 £7–10
What an energetic, richly vivid Merlot! It has damsons, spice, tannins, savoury finishing fruit (blackberries) and a lovely texture.

Longridge Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 1999, South African, White 16.5 £7–10
Superb texture and creamy-rich fruit - never over baked. A lovely, vibrant white wine.

Merryvale Cabernet Sauvignon 1997, USA, Red 17 £13–20
An alcoholic (14.5%) subterfuge. Cab Sauv? Nope. There's Merlot, Cab Franc and Petit Verdot too. No wonder the French prefer to keep grape names off labels (Alsace excepted). All that said, though, this lying blend lies gorgeously on the taste buds with a polish recalling Lafite in a soft year.

SAFEWAY

Cono Sur Pinot Noir Reserve 1999, Chilean, Red 16 £5–7
Chewy, ripe, thick, aromatic, tannic, lingering. Volnay was never like this!

Errazuriz Merlot Reserva, Don Maximiano Estate Aconcagua, 1998, Chilean, Red 16.5 £7–10
Like drinking a soft velvet glove suffused with essence of cassis. Top 129 stores

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1998, Chilean, Red 17 £7–10
Deep savoury riches tantalise the tongue and tighten the throat as the tannins ooze down

SAINSBURY'S

Santa Julia Viognier 2000, Argentinian, White 16.5 £5.00
Beautiful dry apricot fruit with a touch of crème brûlée on the finish or is it gunsmoke? Well, it's a delicate beauty for all that, but a hugely elegant aperitif. Most stores.

Petaluma Bridgewater Mill Shiraz 1998, Australian, Red 16.5 £7.10
Very chewy, coal-edged texture, deep and rich and softly spicy. Lovely rich plums, blackcurrants and a touch of leather. Delicious tannins, too, so it has backbone and bite. Not at all stores

Concha y Toro Casillero del Diablo Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Chilean, Red 16.5 £5.00
Develops on the taste buds from ripe cherries to smoky blackcurrants, a hint of spice, a suggestion of gravy. A lovely, textured Cabernet of great class.

Errazuriz Merlot 1999, Chilean, Red 16.5 £5–7
One of the world's most immediately delicious and deeply drinkable Merlots. Beautiful texture, and leather-soft, blackberry and cherry-ripe fruit.

Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Domaine Michel Bernard 1998, French, Red 17 £10–13
An expensive treat for that festive fowl. A wine of aroma, depth, complexity and power. Selected stores.

Louis Bernard Côtes du Rhône Villages 1999, French, Red 16.5 £5.00
Superb rustic charmer with sophisticated manners and tannic style. Lovely herbs, earth and deep plum fruit which is gloriously unpretentious.

Wild Pig Shiraz, VdP d'Oc 1999, French, Red 16 £5.00
Lovely dry herbiness with plummy fruit with a very slight cassis edge to it. Has a rugged feel, yet it isn't too deep or rich so much as rustically elegant and gently spicy. Most stores.

Classic Selection Chablis Domaine Sainte Cecil 1999, Sainsbury's, French, White 16 £7–10
Well, well! Indeed it's classic: dry and minerally, and with that sedate crispness which good Chablis has. Most stores

Kumala Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 2000, South African, Red 16 £5.00
Huge juice and tannins. Lovely meaty edge.

Bellingham Sauvignon Blanc 2000, South African, White 16.5 £5–7
A high class, high-wire act where fine acids tiptoe along a fine wire of gooseberry rich fruit. Delicately poised yet potent, this is a lovely wine.

Danie de Wet Call of the African Eagle Chardonnay Reserve 2000, South African, White 17 £5–7
Very delicate, subtle, stealthy artefact which is consummately delicious as a sum of its component parts rather than one dominant element. Thus it is dry yet vaguely melony and nutty (with a hint of peach and cream), fresh yet textured and gently rich, and it finishes with aplomb (yet not with a wallop - more of a small sigh). A very assured, understated wine of great class. 120 stores

Kumala Chardonnay 2000, South African, White 15.5 £5.00
Big, rich, smoky, musky, fruit. Brilliant

for oriental food Also available in a three litre box at the equivalent of £3 49 a bottle.

Agramont Tempranillo/ Cabernet Sauvignon, Navarra Crianza 1996, Spanish, Red 16 5 £5–7
Gorgeous texture of lingering depth and complexity. Has softness yet dryness with its firm tannins buttressing the blackcurrants and plums and cherries. The finish is terrific. A posh dinner party wine Better than many more expensive Bordeaux.

Ochoa Gran Reserva, Navarra 1993, Spanish, Red 16 £10–13
A distinguished grandee of a rich treat: tobacco-edged, rich, very dry and subtly figgy (and a touch raisiny), this is an unusually mature wine to find in a supermarket. It's at its peak of drinkability. 80 stores.

SOMERFIELD

Argentine Sangiovese 2000, Somerfield, Argentinian, Red 16 5 £5.00
Superb! If only Chianti could be this thrilling for the money.

Bright Brothers Barrica Shiraz 1999, Argentinian, Red 16 £5–7
Comes across like an Aussie with attitude - thanks to the tannins Terrific red wine. Classy, bold, full of character and beguiling fruit.

Normans Old Vines Grenache 1998, Australian, Red 16 5 £5.00
Possibly the tastiest under-a-fiver Aussie red around. Has great depth and soft pliability but piles of character from the tannins. Old vines live on! Selected stores.

Domaine Boyar Bulgarian Premium Cuvee Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Bulgarian, Red 16 £5.00
Has a lovely chewy edge of lightly smoked fruit, excellent tannins and a rich, rousing finish.

Bulgarian Chardonnay 1999, Somerfield, Bulgarian, White 16 £3.50
One of the best Chardonnays I've tasted from this country. There are, I assure you, far less appealing and aromatically adventurous burgundies on sale at ten times the price.

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc, Canepa 2000, Somerfield, Chilean, White 16 £5.00
Gorgeous melon and nuts here. Touches of class, suggestions of complexity, hints of real style

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1999, Chilean, White 16 £5–7
Even more energy and richness to the new vintage. Selected stores.

Beaumes de Venise, Côtes du Rhône Villages 1998, French, Red 16 £5 7
Stunning blend of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre and Cinsault which opens demurely, then goes big and rich, then calms itself, then goes warm and deep. Lovely experience.

Domaine de Courtilles Côte 125 Corbieres 1998, French, Red 16 £5–7
Most unusually stealthy fruit which moves like lava across the taste buds revealing deliciously soft and warm nuances of flavour. Improving nicely in bottle (cf the entry in the main Somerfield section of this book).

La Solitude 17 £7-10
Chateauneuf-du-Pape 1998, French, Red
The sheer velvet class of this fruit - characterful and biting in spite of its polish - is a joy. It has immense and lasting charm.

Vacqueyras Domaine de la Soleiade 1999, French, Red 16.5 £5.00
The essence of what French country red is all about: characterful, soft, gently tannic, beautifully herby, finely textured. Superb stuff and a great bargain

L A Cetto Petite Syrah 1997, Mexican, Red 17 £5.00
Quite superb. Like an eccentric combination of Barbaresco, Barossa Shiraz and Priorat. In other words, great tannic texture and uppityness. This is a revolutionary red under a fiver.

Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, South African, Red 16.5 £7-10
Compellingly concentrated and classy and generous.

South African Cabernet Sauvignon 2000, Somerfield, South African, Red 16.5 £5.00
Superb woody, dry fruit, with feisty tannins adding loads of character. A bitingly bonny mouthful of liquefied hedgerows

Spice Route Pinotage 1999, South African, Red 16.5 £7-10
Gorgeous tobacco-scented richness which has compelling texture pulling the taste buds in myriad directions Wonderful life-affirming quaffing. Selected stores

Spice Route Shiraz 1999, South African, Red 16.5 £5-7
A truly delicious construct with a beefy texture, a meaty aroma, and a savoury finish. Not a wine, then, to argue with - even if you're a vegetarian. Selected stores.

Bellingham Sauvignon Blanc 2000, South African, White 16.5 £5-7
A high class, high-wire act where fine acids tiptoe along a fine wire of gooseberry-rich fruit. Delicately poised yet potent, this is a lovely wine.

Kumala Sauvignon Blanc/Colombard 2000, South African, White 15 £5.00
Terrific rich freshness. Limited distribution.

Espiral Tempranillo Barrique 1999, Spanish, Red 16 £5-7
Exciting stuff. Has loads of spicy plums with great tannins. Very urgent fruit, keen to please. Selected stores.

TESCO

Smithbrook Cabernet Sauvignon/Cabernet Franc/Petit Verdot 1998, Australian, Red 16 £7-10
Claret given soul, heart and lots of soft, fleshy fruit with hard, tannic muscles. Claret made on Mars. Selected stores.

Caliterra Reserve Syrah 1999, Chilean, Red 16.5 £7-10
Gorgeous! Quite gorgeous spice, hedgerow fruits, plums, and savoury tannins. A richly serious wine of consummate, well textured class and style. Selected stores.

Caliterra Syrah 1999, Chilean, Red '16 £5–7
A very leathery, savoury, pliant Syrah which oozes charm without oozing OTT fruit. (Yet it is unashamedly modern.)

Cono Sur Pinot Noir Reserve 1999, Chilean, Red 16 £5–7
Chewy, ripe, thick, aromatic, tannic, lingering Volnay was never like this!

Errazuriz Don Maximiano 1998, Chilean, Red 16 £13–20
Very deep and delicious, superb tannins giving the wine personality and backbone. The overall impression is of power and concentration. Worth eighteen quid? When so much wonderful stuff from Chile costs around a fiver? Well, it rates 16. The tannins give it such class.

Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1999, Chilean, Red 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous savoury juice with rich tannins.

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1998, Chilean, Red 17 £7–10
Deep savoury riches tantalise the tongue and tighten the throat as the tannins ooze down

Valdivieso Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 1998, Chilean, Red 17 £5–7
Coffee, cocoa, herbs, roast meat, tannins - what a liberal assembly of great riches here. Most stores.

Montes Alpha Chardonnay 1998, Chilean, White 17.5 £7–10
A tenner very well spent. For this is a marvellously couth, Burgundy-style Chardonnay with added creamy textured richness of great sexiness. Selected stores.

Château Haut-Bourcier Premieres Côtes de Blaye 1999, French, Red 16 –£5.00
Stunning bargain here. A truly concentrated, superbly tannic claret of depth and daring. Great class here. Selected stores.

Domaine Richeaume Organic Syrah Côtes de Provence 1999, French, Red 16.5 £13–20
Impressively dry and deep, herby and splendidly rustic, but, and it's a delicious but, it has masses of class and concentrated charm. Wine Advisor Stores.

French Revolution Le Rouge 1999, French, Red 16 –£5.00
Hugely different from its white cousin, in that there is real character and effortless fruit here. Great depth, marvellous tannins, firm, rich texture. Selected stores.

Jaboulet Côtes du Rhône Villages 1998, French, Red 16.5 £5–7
Beautiful, evolved tannins and fruit. It develops wonderfully on the tongue, showing complex fruits and herby earth all knitted together perfectly. Selected stores

Jaboulet Gigondas 'Pierre Aiguille' 1998, French, Red 16 £10–13
A terrific well-moulded Gigondas of superb texture and unusual ripeness. Complex, compelling, very collected. Selected stores

MV Cabernet Sauvignon VdP d'Oc 1998, French, Red 16 £7–10
Superb double whammy of richness and rousing depth of fruit. Has tannins and fruit in brilliant form.

Chablis Premier Cru 1998, Tesco, French, White 16 £10–13
An exceptionally rich and complex Chablis of considerable concentration and class. One of Tesco's so-called 'Finest' range.

Guigal Condrieu 1999, French, White 16 £13–20
Open for five to six hours at least, to appreciate the vegetal, apricot fruit - very dry but very individual. Selected stores.

Camelot 1999 (Sicily), Italian, Red 16 £7–10
Stunning earthy fruit of hedgerow complexity and great concentration. Great orchestral tannins. Selected stores.

Tre Uve Ultima 1998, Italian, Red 16 £5–7
Superb depth of tannic richness geared to smoothly run alongside smooth plum/blackberry fruit. Selected stores.

'I Portali' Basilicata Greco 1999, Italian, White 16 £5.00
A splendidly vigorous Chardonnay of dry, mineral freshness and rich crispness. Individual approach to this trendy grape. Selected stores.

Kumala Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, South African, Red 16.5 £7–10
Compellingly concentrated and classy and generous.

Apostles Falls Chardonnay 1999, South African, White 16.5 £5–7
Intensely perfumed and flavoured. Exhibits a range of stone fruit overcut by a soft textured richness. Very high class stuff.

Kumala Colombard/ Chardonnay 2000, South African, White 15 £5.00
Very bright and lemonic. Terrific fish wine.

Kumala Semillon Chardonnay 2000, South African, White 15.5 £5.00
Delicious, rich, gooseberry fruit. Ripe yet balanced.

South African Chardonnay 2000, Tesco, South African, White 15 £5.00
A rich, ripe food wine. Has a hint of spicy smoke to the melony fruit.

Thandi Elgin Chardonnay 1999, South African, White 16 £5–7
Marvellous dash and richness here: creamy, gently spicy, textured, very deep. Wonderful food and conversation wine. Selected stores

Thelema Mountain Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 1999, South African, White 17 £10–13
Perfect herbaceous undertone to beautifully multi-layered fruit of massive charm.

Spanish Monastrell 1999, Tesco, Spanish, Red 15 £5.00
Soft, immensely so, good, warm tannins and a touch of spicy from the plummy fruit.

Tempranillo 1999, Tesco, Spanish, Red 15 £5.00
A tastier performer than scores of Riojas. Has character and class.

Con Class Selection Especial 1999, Spanish, White 15 £5.00
A superbly rich, dry food white wine of great versatility. Suits anything from

roast chicken to spicy scallops. Most stores.

Barrelli Creek Cabernet Sauvignon Gallo Sonoma 1995, USA, Red 17 £10–13
Superb complex attack of plums/blackcurrants/ripe damsons and hugely warm and spicy tannins. A real Christmas treat of wonderful texture and depth.

Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 (organic), USA, Red 16 £7–10
Deliciously textured and deep, blackcurrant richness. A classy specimen.

THRESHER

Rosemount Grenache Syrah Mourvedre 1997, Australian, Red 17 £13–20
Very big, soft, ripe and rich - the perfect catch for a hungry mate. Powerful liquorice and figs, berries and leather. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only

Tatachilla Grenache Shiraz 1999, Australian, Red 16 £5–7
Savoury complexity here: rich, layered, tangy, ripe.

Lindemans Bin 65 Chardonnay 2000, Australian, White 16.5 £5.00
Has acquired a nutty undertone in this vintage. Still up there as one of Aussie's best value Chardonnays.

Mitchelton Blackwood Park Riesling 1999, Australian, White 16 £5–7
Very elegant and tangy. Deliciously sophisticated tippling.

Mitchelton Viognier Rousanne 1997, Australian, White 17 £10–13
Gorgeous freshness on comparatively middle-aged legs. Oily, rich, vibrant, textured concentration. Very fine. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Pewsey Vale Riesling 1999, Australian, White 16 £5–7
Delicious mineral tang (subtle) to the firm, rich fruit. Always a consistently charming performer

Tatachilla Semillon Chardonnay 1999, Australian, White 16.5 £5–7
Concentration, class, conviction, caressing cool fruit. A lovely wine.

The Willows Vineyard Semillon 1996, Australian, White 17.5 £7–10
Gorgeously mature, creamy, aromatic, smoky ripeness and riveting richness. Lovely texture and concentration. Wine Rack and Bottoms Up only.

Isla Negra Cabernet Sauvignon, Rapel 1999, Chilean, Red 16.5 £5–7
Gorgeous savoury juice with rich tannins.

Valdivieso Cabernet Franc Reserve 1998, Chilean, Red 17 £7–10
Deep savoury riches tantalise the tongue and tighten the throat as the tannins ooze down.

Isla Negra Chardonnay 1999, Chilean, White 16 £5–7
Superb texture and ripe, plump fruit.

Kumala Semillon Chardonnay 2000, South African, White 15.5 £5.00
Delicious rich, gooseberry fruit. Ripe yet balanced

UNWINS

Katnook Estate 16.5 £7–10
Coonawarra Sauvignon Blanc 1999, Australian, White
No, it isn't classic Sauvignon, it's too rich and svelte for that, and the mineral edge is very subtle. But the fruit is gloriously engaging and fulfilling.

Valdivieso Cabernet 17 £7–10
Franc Reserve 1998, Chilean, Red
Deep savoury riches tantalise the tongue and tighten the throat as the tannins ooze down.

Briccolo Cabernet 16 £5–7
Sauvignon 1999, Italian, Red
Very jammy and ripe, spicy, tannic.

Kumala Merlot Reserve 16.5 £7–10
1999, South African, Red
Superb!

VICTORIA WINE

Tatachilla Grenache 16 £5–7
Shiraz 1999, Australian, Red
Savoury complexity here: rich, layered, tangy, ripe.

Lindemans Bin 65 16.5 –£5.00
Chardonnay 2000, Australian, White
Has acquired a nutty undertone in this vintage. Still up there as one of Aussie's best value Chardonnays.

Mitchelton Blackwood 16 £5–7
Park Riesling 1999, Australian, White
Very elegant and tangy. Deliciously sophisticated tippling.

Pewsey Vale Riesling 16 £5–7
1999, Australian, White
Delicious mineral tang (subtle) to the firm rich fruit. Always a consistently charming performer.

Tatachilla Semillon 16.5 £5–7
Chardonnay 1999, Australian, White
Concentration, class, conviction, caressing cool fruit. A lovely wine.

Isla Negra Cabernet 16.5 £5–7
Sauvignon, Rapel 1999, Chilean, Red
Gorgeous savoury juice with rich tannins.

WAITROSE

Kumala Reserve 16.5 £7–10
Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, South African, Red
Compellingly concentrated and classy and generous.

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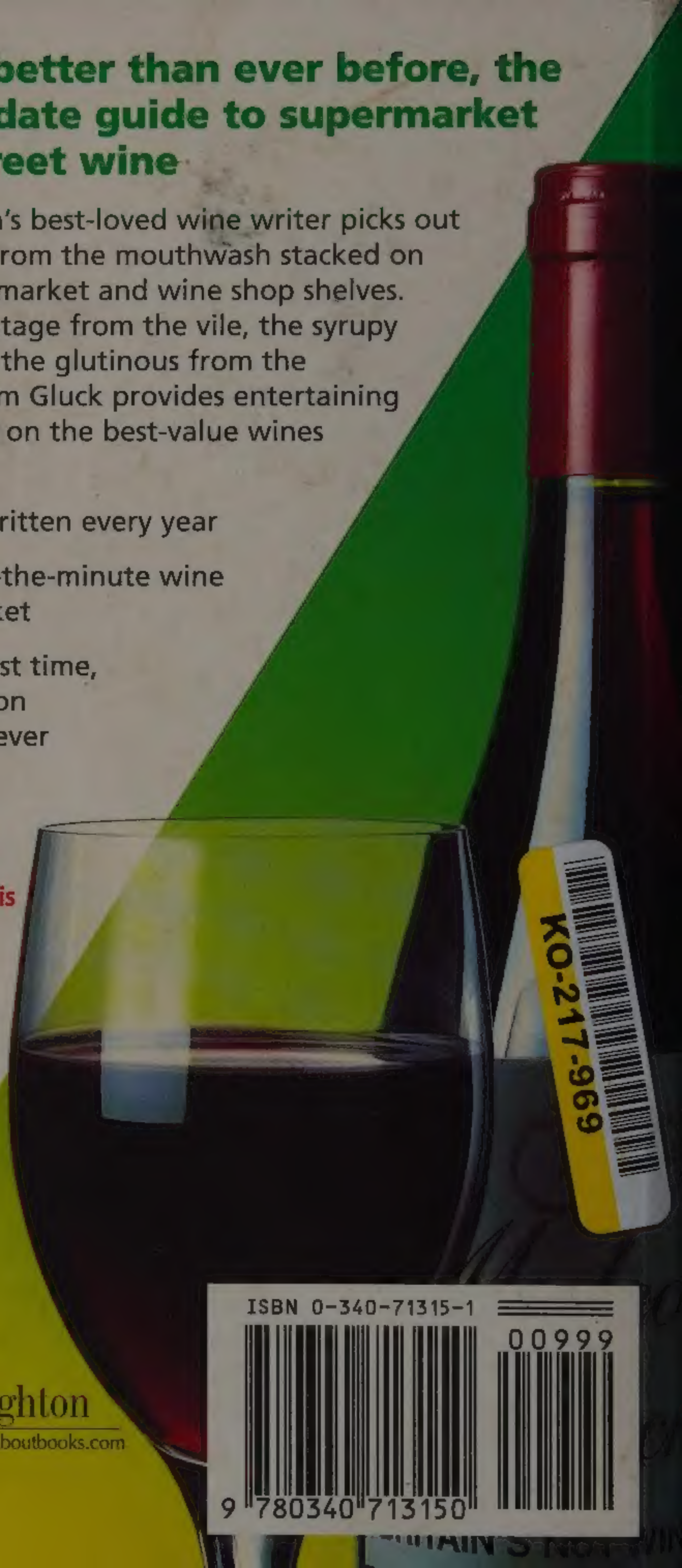

KO-217-969

Non-Fiction: Food and Drink
Cover photograph: David Rudkin

Hodder & Stoughton
visit our website at www.madaboutbooks.com

ISBN 0 340 71315 1
£9.99

ISBN 0-340-71315-1
00999
9 780340 713150